

Base Tyranny



Matt Erickson

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By:

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Released into the Public Domain

June 2, 2013

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Reclaiming Liberty and Justice, Once and For All

Vancouver, Washington

Base (bās'), Base₂, *adj.* Definition # 1: **Morally low; without dignity of sentiment; mean-spirited, selfish, or cowardly.**

Tyranny (tir'ə nē) *n.* Definition #1. **Arbitrary or unrestrained exercise of power; despotic abuse of authority.**

The Random House College Dictionary, Revised Edition, 1980.

Base Tyranny: The type of government sadly operating within the U.S.A. today.

Base Tyranny is the second book in a fiction series, being a sequel to *Bald Justice*. Both are freely available online.

To my loving wife Pam, for all her love and support.

In honor of all those brave patriots who have fought against
Base Tyranny — immoral, undignified, mean-spirited, selfish, and
cowardly tyranny.

Chapter One

“I knew your brain wasn’t mush,” said investigative reporter Sarah Jacobs, after Mark Evanston first began discussing his latest research findings looking into a very dark period of American history.

“I think any number of people may argue that point with you,” replied Mark dryly. “But nonetheless, I must confess that my hospitalization to install a shunt in my brain to relieve a buildup of pressure 15 months ago was a ruse, only a cover.

“But you can’t write about that, of course, to protect those who helped me so I could heal from my kidnapping injuries.”

“So you feigned a setback so you wouldn’t appear much of a continued threat to the people who kidnapped you who were never caught?” asked Sarah.

“Precisely,” replied Mark.

Sarah was in Vancouver, Washington, nominally to attend Mark’s 52nd birthday party the next day, on Saturday, March 29, 2014.

Former U.S. Treasurer Janet Davidson and former U.S. Marshal Steve Fredrickson were also at Friday’s meeting. Janet and Steve had learned of the secret six months earlier, when Mark and his wife Penny met up with them in Washington, D.C.

To the casual observer, the Evanston’s had merely been tourists visiting the nation’s capitol in the fall of 2013.

Mark travelled to Washington, D.C., to research his fourth great-grandfather’s 1871 murder. Family lore had it that his great-grandfather’s great-grandfather, Chester Adamson, had uncovered compelling evidence of scandalous activity but was killed before he could expose it.

What Mark discovered made the legend look like child’s play.

“Now that you are all here, I’ll relay my latest efforts to bring base tyranny to the purifying light of day; immoral, undignified, mean-spirited, selfish and cowardly tyranny — tyranny so deviously treacherous that the word by itself doesn’t do it justice,” Mark relayed to his listeners.

Mark’s story began on Saturday, December 22, 2012. It was two days after Sarah’s first article on Mark’s monetary research had been printed in the Washington, D.C. based-paper *The Washington Sentinel* where she was an up-and-coming investigative reporter.

“Sarah,” Mark continued, “you must keep the identity hidden of the people I discuss, without giving away any information which could lead anyone to them.”

“No problem, I understand.”

“Answering the door, Penny invited in our visitor, Peter Dennison, after he travelled to Vancouver once he had read Sarah’s story and my work.

“Peter was confident that because of Sarah’s story, my information would remain in the limelight for some time. Thus he was worried that my abductors who undoubtedly released me to prevent making me a martyr which could thrust my work well into the public eye, perhaps wouldn’t feel like they had much left to lose by completing their original task.

“As he saw it, I only had two real options. The first was to disappear into the woodwork as he had done, when he hadn’t had time or ability to plan alternatives.

“Penny and I wouldn’t be able to see family or old friends we’d leave behind and we’d be mostly on our own. Since no one could tie us with him, however, he stated that he would help us thereafter, getting us settled somewhere and keeping tabs on us.

“His second option allowed us to remain with family and friends, so we chose it.

“With this option, it was mandatory for us to make my abductors think I was no longer a continued threat to them. My kidnappers needed to think that they had actually punished me enough that my continuing ailments would be a form of on-going torture in itself, so that they would perhaps see killing me as letting me off too-easily. That was risky, because we would have to second-guess their warped thoughts. Neither am I much of an actor.

“But it was my tormentors who knew best and first-hand how much they had beaten me, so it wouldn’t really take any stretch of the imagination for them to believe I suffered a relapse. While I knew the thugs who actually beat me knew how bad of shape I was in, I didn’t know if they had sufficiently relayed to their bosses my true condition. So that was another vital concern.

“When I was scheduled for the evening news television magazine interview, Peter gave me some medication which caused me to get woozy and collapse in front of a national audience. He had an ambulance pick me up and take me to a private clinic where the doctor was part of a very tightly-knit organization Peter founded decades earlier. This group worked behind the scenes to promote constitutional government.

“Basically, my interview was a great opportunity to show the world I suffered a significant setback, one which left my memory in shambles and which eliminated my critical-thinking skills.

“After that, I was just to play along with being quite slow, which is actually tougher to intentionally do on a consistent basis than it first sounds, unless one remains heavily drugged. But I couldn’t stay drugged unless I was willing to give up my research, which I wasn’t.

“Thus it was even more important for me to stay out of the public eye. That wasn’t much of a problem, as I’m not really a front-and-center kind of guy anyway, but I prefer to stay behind-the-scenes,” said Mark.

“Is that it?” asked Sarah.

“Yep, pretty much,” replied Mark. “As far as that part of the story goes.”

“I can just imply that your condition slowly improved after your brain surgery with continued therapy,” offered Sarah.

“That is another thing you must be careful discussing; my therapist who visited me two or three times a week for many months, at least other than her actual therapy.

“My therapist, Abigail Galloway, is the daughter of family friends of Peter Dennison who knew her from birth.

“Abbey became a nurse practitioner after first being a physical therapy assistant, figuring such real-life practical experiences helping people deal with aches, pains, bumps and bruises would come in handy in her peculiar interests which followed Peter Dennison’s personal crusades.

“Her first duty each visit would be to sweep for electronic bugs in our apartment, in case any were somehow planted. Once I was able to resume my private work, I would request various items of research that she would provide me on her next visit, to try and keep my work secret.

“She would bring me the requested information and I would supply her with any updated requests. Then she’d give me my physical therapy I needed to get me on the road to quicker and more complete recovery.

“After she left, I pored over the research in private with the shades drawn, the same as when I was writing on an old computer without any communication cards. I never connected to the internet and we gave up cell phone usage,” offered Mark. “The old rotary-dial phone we always kept plugged in had its microphone transmitter removed but ringer intact. We kept a fully-functioning phone near another phone outlet and plugged it into the wall jack to answer any incoming calls or make outgoing calls.

“I don’t know if I could go back to the Stone Age,” stated Sarah. “That would be torture for me.”

“We lived simply and it wasn’t an issue for us,” replied Mark.

“My Washington, D.C. trip was scheduled when I needed to continue some research.

“I didn’t perform the extraneous research myself, just in case anyone was watching. But Penny and I did go to Chester’s home and meet with the owners, as I didn’t think anyone else could have met with them except under false pretenses. And there we found Chester’s hidden research.”

“What?” asked Sarah. “Just like your great-grandfather, your fourth great-grandfather also had hidden research?”

“Yes,” answered Mark.

“You seem to have trouble deeply ingrained in your genes,” replied Sarah.

“Which explains a lot about my husband,” offered Penny; the others responding with chuckles.

“Was that research also related to money?” inquired Janet Davidson, not knowing about Mark’s discovery.

“Yes, but it also exposed a troubling conspiracy and named the conspirators themselves,” answered Mark. “But let me continue through my story this past year, before I get into Chester Adamson’s story, as the latter will take some time to explain.

“Anyway, back in Washington, D.C., I met with Janet and Steve a few times to discreetly pass my research requests along to them. They in turn would pass the requests along to research analysts they implicitly trusted, who just thought they were doing them a favor.

“I would review the information once they got it back. Penny and I actually spent most of our days sightseeing and playing tourist.”

“Before going further into your trip, I would like to know more about Peter Dennison, for background, if you wouldn’t mind.” said Sarah.

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Peter Dennison, 69 years old, told those who asked that he lived on small disability pension from a work-related accident.

When pressed, he told the story of being caught in a piece of machinery he had been repairing when someone inadvertently started it up; that it pulled him in and banged him up badly.

That story was more believable than what really happened, while it importantly drew him less attention.

The real story was that he had been tortured for retribution after he exposed the cause of some accounting discrepancies in the corporate books of the major defense contractor where he worked.

Before it happened, he never imagined anyone would ever jeopardize soldiers’ safety by intentionally supplying lower-grade materials than were specified, especially in the shields in the flak jackets being made which were supposed to protect the soldiers’ very lives.

The local crime boss who didn’t get his cut was enraged that his best-laid plans were foiled by a bean counter because of the greed of the accounting clerk who submitted the first bill to the defense contractor 2% higher for a little extra profit for himself.

Though the involved employees were soon found guilty at their trials and imprisoned, the mobster was able to pay off a sufficient number of officials such that he was found not guilty at his trial through an ‘error’ in his criminal processing.

He was thus free to pursue his revenge, which he achieved six months later.

The overly-greedy accounting clerk at the plate manufacturing firm was said to have committed suicide in his cell, but prison officials suspected foul play by prison inmates and at least one guard, although they couldn't prove anything.

Peter was the other target of the mobster's revenge.

Peter managed to escape only because one of the thugs ordered to first torture him had two brothers in the Marines who were serving in Viet Nam. That guy found enough integrity that day to help the man who may have helped save his brother's lives escape with his own.

The brute himself left behind crime that day and enlisted in the service for his self-imposed penance.

Peter escaped only with the torn clothes on his back and a few dollars the reformed bully gave him for his next meal. Peter was able to hitch a ride from a local farmer who saw him limping away from the spot where he had been dropped off several towns away.

The farmer wanted to take Peter to the hospital, but Peter explained that it would not be good for him to be found recuperating there. After hearing the tale, the farmer who had a son in the Army said he could put out a cot on his enclosed back porch and Peter could recuperate there.

During his recuperation, Peter and the farmer enjoyed long discussions with one another. When Peter told the farmer that he was dedicating his life to fighting the corrupting of America, the farmer became Peter's first recruit to Peter's new mission in life.

It was the mobster being able to pay off local officials which bothered Peter so greatly.

It was one thing for a few thugs to do something as dumb as they did. It was another matter entirely when government officials who had sworn an oath to support the Constitution instead subverted that oath, protecting the guy who was willing to sacrifice the lives of soldiers to gain illicit profits.

After Peter left the farm, he hitchhiked to his friend Jared Lockwood's family home. Jared and Peter were once college roommates.

Peter was raised in an orphanage and knew nothing of his family or background. Once he became of age, he went into the service before later going on to college and getting a degree in accounting.

Jared Lockwood was from a wealthy family with deep roots in their community.

Though Jared and Peter were opposite in many ways and four years apart in age, they had similar viewpoints on things that mattered. They were inseparable during school, and Peter often went home with Jared during the holidays.

When Jared saw his old college-roommate battered and beaten, he was grief-stricken. Once Peter told Jared his story, they both understood there was real evil in the world.

Jared became Peter's second and most important recruit, as Jared vowed that day to help him fight the growing evil to which Peter had already dedicated his life combating.

Jared provided the initial financial backing for Peter's 'pension,' while Peter used his analytical skills and effort to investigate matters which fell through the cracks at law enforcement agencies.

They would keep their eyes and ears open for new recruits, as they were well aware they needed ample help in their new objective.

When Peter suffered some setbacks after he had moved to Denver, his treating physician became another of his early recruits.

Mark Evanston would benefit from Peter's experiences decades later, as he would also benefit from Peter's neurosurgical recruit who later moved to Portland.

Chapter Two

“So tell me Mark, what got you started on your latest research?” asked Sarah.

“My work on legal tender paper currencies from my first book naturally led me to study the events leading up to the 1862 act which first emitted them,” said Mark. “Well, the earliest and biggest political battles before 1862 were always waged by two opposing schools of thought over congressionally-chartered national banks. So I started there.

“In 1791, Congress approved a bank bill to charter the first Bank of the United States. The bill landed on President George Washington’s desk for his signature or veto.

“In accordance with Article II, Section 3, Clause 1 of the Constitution, President Washington requested the opinion in writing of the principal officer in the pertinent executive departments on the constitutionality and appropriateness of a national bank.

“Writing against the bill were first Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and Attorney General Edmund Randolph. James Madison also vehemently opposed the 1791 banking measure and spoke at length against it. The three assured President Washington and the House of Representatives that members of Congress were not empowered to erect a corporation.

“Jefferson’s and Madison’s Republican Party of yeoman farmers favored limited government and hard money. These Republicans are often referred to today as Jeffersonian-Republicans or Democratic-Republicans to separate them from the Republican Party of Lincoln.

“On the side favoring the bank was Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton and the Federalist Party. Like the Whig Party of later years, the Federalist Party of the industrial north favored a strong central government capable of bestowing political favors on influential supporters for mutual benefit.

“President Washington followed Hamilton’s advice and signed the bank act chartering the first Bank of the United States for a 20-year term,” said Mark.

“That must have been a pivotal decision,” commented Janet.

“It was,” answered Mark. “If Washington had agreed with Jefferson, Randolph and Madison, America undoubtedly would have had a very different history.”

“Why did Washington side with Hamilton?” asked Sarah.

“Because Hamilton was right about his primary point; Congress did have the power to erect a corporation, so they could therefore incorporate a bank,” answered Mark.

“Why did Jefferson, Randolph, and Madison all argue that Congress didn’t have that power?” asked Steve. “After all, those three were certainly no dummies and arguably knew more about the Constitution than most any three other people.”

“Because they concentrated on the rules of the Constitution,” replied Mark. “And according to those rules they knew well, they were correct. Those rules do not empower Congress to erect corporations.”

“Ok, now I’m confused,” admitted Sarah. “You are directly contradicting yourself.”

“Contradictions cannot exist,” commented Mark. “When apparent contradictions exist, check one’s premises. It all depends on one’s definitions of ‘rule;’ if the ‘exception’ to the rules is an ‘exception’ or an additional ‘rule’ which provides an exception to all the other rules.”

“Ok, now you’re confusing me,” said Steve.

“Intentionally, to show you how the game works; to purposefully cause sufficient confusion so no one follows what is being done.

“For hundreds of years since Jefferson, Randolph and Madison first argued against the constitutionality of Congress erecting a corporation only to have President Washington follow Hamilton’s opposing recommendation, strict constructionists of the Constitution have repeatedly asserted that given actions of Congress in excess of the Constitution’s mandates are unconstitutional, only to have the supreme Court uphold those excessive actions.”

“Exactly,” commented Steve. “The justices of the supreme Court acting as tyrants themselves.”

“I respectfully disagree,” argued Mark.

“Well, both sides can’t both be right,” said Janet.

“Yes they can, *if they are not both talking about the same thing at the same time*,” replied Mark. “Hamilton slyly concentrated instead on the single exception to all the rules.”

“Are you still talking nonsense?” asked Steve.

“No. I’m just saying to understand how government acts in apparent disregard to the Constitution while receiving judicial blessing, one must be very clear and very accurate.

“Although Jefferson, Randolph, and Madison were correct about the rules of Congress, Hamilton cunningly pointed out the exception to that rule. While the other three men were correct about the normal rules, they naively overlooked the exception which trumped those rules *in the particular case Hamilton provided*.

Madison especially should have known better, as he was the person who proposed that exception at the Constitutional Convention in the first place.

“But before I go further into that exception which you should all know well by now, I’d rather finish giving the backdrop for those events which occurred between 1789 and the onset of the Civil War,” commented Mark.

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“The first Bank of the United States chartered in 1791 ceased operation in 1811 after Congress refused to extend its original 20-year charter during James Madison’s presidency,” Mark continued.

“A legislative bill for a second national bank received congressional approval in 1815, but Madison vetoed it when it arrived on his desk.

“However, when Congress approved another bank bill in 1816, President Madison this time signed the legislation chartering the second Bank of the United States for a 20-year term.”

“Why did Madison oppose a nationally-chartered bank in 1791 and 1815, only to sign his name in 1816?” asked Steve.

“Well, the War of 1812 was quite expensive, of course. The wildcat State banks also provided little uniformity and financial matters were in a greater state of disarray because of them,” replied Mark.

“That second bank’s charter likewise expired at the end of its original 20-year term, in 1836, after earlier legislation proposing to extend it was vetoed by Democratic President Andrew Jackson,” Mark stated.

“And he became quite famous for that,” commented Janet.

“Yes, the debate over national banks was extensive and heated. Perhaps little else enflamed the political passions of men during that era like paper currency national banks,” replied Mark.

“With prolonged peace, however, hard money advocates always won the political battles against national banks.

“On July 4, 1840, Democratic President Martin Van Buren ceremoniously signed into law the first Independent Treasury act,” said Mark.

“What is an ‘Independent Treasury’?” questioned Sarah.

“President Van Buren labeled it our Second Declaration of Independence, the separation of bank and state — our independence from banks and their debasing paper currencies.

“When Andrew Jackson won his fight against the second Bank of the United States, he put government funds instead in favored State-chartered banks.

“Thus, government still used banks, only they weren’t national.

“Well, the Independent Treasury, also known as the sub-treasury system, divorced itself from banks completely, *including* State banks.

“Under the new system, the government would deal with all payments only within its own treasury,” replied Mark. “Which meant no government money would be deposited in any bank which could then use those funds as an asset-base for making large loans within their fractional reserve banking system.”

“I can’t image bankers hating anything more than that,” Steve offered.

“Precisely,” answered Mark. “Jackson at least still used banks, they were just smaller local banks.

“Van Buren began implementation of a system which would operate government independent of all banks.”

“How come I’ve never heard of this before?” asked Sarah. “It is all new to me.”

“Well, in 1841, the Whigs were swept into power in Congress and the presidency. Together President John Tyler and Congress overturned the Independent Treasury act in 1841,” Mark answered. “Thus this system which sought a four-year conversion to using only gold and silver coin was never fully implemented.”

“I guess that’s why I hadn’t heard of it,” said Sarah.

“But that doesn’t explain why the 1846 Independent Treasury act which did become fully operational is not any better known,” answered Mark. “This act also allowed use of treasury notes along with gold and silver coin and it became fully operational for 15 years, lasting through to the Civil War, with remnants beyond.”

“Really?” asked Sarah.

“Yes. But before the 1846 act was enacted the Whigs and national banking proponents tried again to establish another national bank. Congress passed the bill for a third national bank, and it also landed on President Tyler’s desk.

“The President nevertheless vetoed the proposed bank bill, because to approve it ‘would be to commit a crime which I would not willfully commit to gain any earthly reward’.

“That the Whig president wasn’t willing to sign his name even on the central matter of their party platform helps show the controversy which national banking played in pre-Civil War politics in America,” stated Mark.

“That undoubtedly took courage,” responded Janet.

“Yes, all his cabinet members but Secretary of State Daniel Webster resigned in protest, attempting to show a vote of no-confidence in the President, trying to force his resignation.

“Banking advocates rioted in front of the White House. The D.C. police were soon formed in response to the incident.”

“I hadn’t heard that story,” admitted Janet.

“Tell me more about the Independent Treasury,” stated Sarah. “It sounds quite juicy.”

“The final battle in the decades-long war between banking proponents and hard money advocates culminated in clear favor of the latter with the signing of the second Independent Treasury act on August 6, 1846, by Democratic President James K. Polk.

“This act became well-established and long proved impenetrable to subsequent attack by national banking advocates.

“The fire-proof vaults and safes of the Treasurer of the United States were made the literal Treasury of the United States. The coinage mints of Philadelphia and New Orleans were made sub-treasuries, as were the custom-houses of New York and Boston.

“Section 6 of the act spectacularly prohibited the deposit of any public money into any bank. Section 16 made it felony embezzlement for any public officer to ‘deposit in any bank...any portion of the public moneys intrusted to him’.

“Section 6 required all receivers of public moneys ‘to keep safely, without loaning’ all public money collected by them. Section 16 likewise made it felony embezzlement for any officer to loan government funds, with or without interest, or to exchange the public money for other funds besides gold and silver coin or Treasury notes, such as bank notes.

“All payments due government by private individuals and businesses, including for postage, were required to be paid under Section 18 in either silver or gold coin or in the government’s interest-bearing Treasury notes, the latter of which were essentially readily-marketed bonds.

“No paper notes issued by any State-chartered private bank could be used for any government payment whatsoever. Of course, since 1836, there was no national bank in operation.

“Section 19 required officials to pay the government’s obligations due its creditors in either gold or silver coin, unless the creditor individually and voluntarily agreed to accept payment in Treasury notes. Only with each creditor’s specific approval could government officials then pay the government’s obligations in Treasury notes.

“Section 20 also required each department head to suspend any disbursing officer who violated any portion of the act, forwarding the

facts of each incident to the President for prompt removal of each guilty officer and court trial, when warranted.

“1846 ushered in an era of hard money which became firmly established. National banking interests and paper money advocates suffered crushing political losses as the courageous Democratic Party then proudly fought for the common man, against strong political and financial interests who sought to hand out perpetual political favors for mutual benefit,” said Mark.

“I don’t understand how I haven’t ever heard of the Independent Treasury or sub-treasury system if it actually operated,” said Sarah.

“I was the Treasurer of the United States for eight years and it is not like I hardly ever heard mention of it myself,” Janet admitted.

“I only hear about there never being enough gold in the world to be on a gold standard,” said Steve. “And now I find out that the United States government ran for 15 full years without even dealing with banks or bank notes. Wow. It’s almost unbelievable.”

“But it’s true,” replied Mark. “That first era of limited government from 1789 until the Civil War era was chock-full of long, drawn-out political feuds between hard money advocates and the influential moneyed elite with their paper currencies and fractional-reserve banking policies.

“There were no national banks after 1836. And after 1846, not even State banks could use government deposits to leverage their paper money. All government gold and silver not in active circulation rested in government vaults and not one dollar of government funds were found in any bank.

“Although modern financial wizards cringe at the thought of money ‘resting’ in government vaults, those who haven’t learned the lesson of a ‘return of money’ versus a ‘return on money’ will someday soon have it firmly and forever ingrained in their minds.

“When the purchasing power of money actually grows year-by-year, one needn’t worry about putting it at risk just to keep even. In such a system, *money is working even as it is safely kept without additional risk.*

“Hard money best provides economic stability and thus best grows an economy. Productivity increases are passed on to consumers and investors in the form of *lowered* prices, naturally putting saved money to work and making it more valuable in the future.

“The primary drawback to a stable monetary system is for financiers. Money saved by inexperience savers doesn’t necessarily enter into the pool which savvy speculators may cunningly drain from time to time with their self-serving boom-bust speculative lending policies for massive short-term profits virtually impossible under monetary stability.

“Monetary devaluation instead encourages people to place their money in jeopardy to try and recoup their losses incurred from holding it. Their inexperience, however, makes them sitting ducks for the more experienced, who are more than happy to separate their naive counterparts from their hard-earned money.

“By 1846, national banking proponents had been dealt their final crushing blow and had clearly lost the battle for supremacy under strict constitutional government, for as long as strict construction of the Constitution remained.

“Financial leaders soon only dreamed again of becoming national powerhouses with direct access to tap into and supply the federal government’s vast fiscal needs, using that source to create even more currency to over-expand the economy on a national scale.

“Government then carried out its important role well, of safeguarding the public money during this stable era, even protecting it from debasement. People’s savings bought more in the future, promoting savings, frugality, and hard work.

“State-chartered private banks nevertheless flourished and (over-) issued their commercial paper, causing localized booms and busts as the quantity of paper money in localized circulation ebbed and flowed with their issuances.

“Their poison, however, was localized, making currency over-issuance stand out more clearly as the culprit in the resultant localized downturn.

“The common man could thus understand the cause of the boom-bust cycle and they began hating the banker’s lies offering easy credit, for the coming bust sure to follow would consolidate the wealth into fewer and fewer hands,” said Mark.

“That must be why bank robbers of the era were often glamorized in public, at least those that didn’t shoot anyone,” commented Steve.

“Banking proponents only dreamed again after 1846 of a uniform liberal banking policy which helped hide their system’s faults from easy detection by large numbers of people.

“Of course, as America suffered her greatest crisis 15 years later, her internal War Between the States, the United States of America became a banker’s paradise, a veritable banking heaven on earth.

“In 1862, government-issued paper currencies were declared to be a legal tender for the first time ever under the Constitution and hundreds of millions of dollars of United States notes were issued.

“In 1863, legislation enacted by the 37th Congress and signed by first Republican President Abraham Lincoln allowed the creation of a multitude of new national banking associations, each of which were capable of being made depositories of the public moneys.

“Paper currencies issued by the new national banks in 1863 were made receivable for all public dues payable to and by the government, except for duties on imports and interest payments.

“Bank paper was again used in most all government transactions, bringing those notes credibility and significance.

“The Independent Treasury system was thus effectively gutted in 1862 with paper currencies and especially 1863 with national banks. It remained in name form, suffering through to 1920 when it was summarily cancelled seven years after enactment of the Federal Reserve act.

“A more complete paradigm shift of the U.S. financial and political structure could perhaps not have occurred between 1846 and 1863. The financial elite and the politically-adept became unstoppable forces as government treaded new ground, enacting legislation never before within its sphere.

“This transition period thus absolutely begged for greater research. I hoped family lore regarding my fourth great-grandfather could perhaps provide some direction. If not, it would at least be realization of my long dream to visit the historical sites around Washington, D.C.,” said Mark.

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After completing his research of *Monetary Laws* in December of 2012, Mark Evanston felt he understood fairly well how the proponents of big government steered the government ship away from strict construction of the U.S. Constitution.

That didn’t necessarily mean he really understood how they were effectively able to pull off the caper, however.

Mark thus sought to learn more about the implementation of such deceptive practices, how the deception first got off the ground. He figured knowing this information could perhaps help him turn the government ship around in the right direction more easily.

It was, after all, a rather large ship and any clues to learning how it got steered off-course could perhaps help steer it back.

Studying the laws of Congress, Mark noted three distinct eras of government action. He observed these eras by viewing the Statutes at Large from a broad perspective, the work which listed every new legislative act of Congress.

During the first era, from 1789 through to the Civil War, it generally took about a decade to fill one volume of the Statutes at Large with new legislation, providing evidence of a general limitation of laws.

The second era of expanding government action lasted from the Civil War to the Great Depression. During this period, one volume of the Statutes was generally filled by new legislation every two years.

The third era of expansive government began in the Depression and continued to the present, as nothing was held sacred from the reach of Congress. A single volume of the Statutes even of multiple parts was filled every single year.

The annual mass of new legislation pouring out from Congress multiplied five-fold during the Civil War as compared with the War of 1812. Inspection of the legislation itself typically showed a general expansion of legislative topics as well as a growing complexity.

As the 1860's coincided with the first paper currencies being declared a legal tender, Mark knew it was important to know more about this era when government seemingly lost its constitutional rudder and became of a fountain of tyranny.

Chapter Three

Mark and Penny's flight to Washington, D.C., on September 22, 2013, was smooth and uneventful, although Penny was still trying to calm down from the flight by the time they made it to their room.

Their progress was a little slower than usual, as Mark would use his wheelchair when they would need to walk more than a few hundred feet or likely have to stand for any prolonged length of time.

They had about a half an hour before they needed to leave for dinner at Janet Davidson's. Steve and Tina Fredrickson would also be joining them for dinner. Neither Penny nor Mark had met Steve's wife, or Janet's husband Joel.

Steve and Tina were already at the Davidson's when the Evanston's arrived. Introductions were made all around and Janet stated that dinner would be ready in 30 minutes.

Sarah Jacobs couldn't make it to dinner, but Mark and Penny were scheduled to have lunch with her later in the week. She had become a sought-after reporter over the past year and was able to break a number of additional high-profile stories.

After introductions and a little small-talk, Mark excused himself to go to the bathroom. After he returned, he handed Steve a note written with an ultra-fine Sharpie on a square of toilet paper which asked if he had swept Janet's house for electronic bugs as Mark had requested when the dinner was first scheduled.

Steve read the unusual note and answered, "No bugs."

"Great," answered Mark.

"I see you are getting mighty paranoid," said Steve. "I like the toilet-paper note, though; simple, but effective."

"Remember, it's not paranoia if you are being watched," Mark joked, who went and flushed the note.

Mark didn't go into his reasons then for his concerns if anyone was listening in, but kept the conversation light until dinner was over. Once the couples adjourned to the living room, however, Mark brought up his purpose for the visit to the government seat.

He had traded several letters with Janet and Steve over the past month, asking if they had any trusted individuals who would be willing to provide some discrete research for him, through them.

Both Steve and Janet had replied in letters that they did.

"I need to confess that I did not suffer a relapse during the taping of our interview last year, just after Christmas," Mark admitted. "It was but a ruse to hopefully discourage anyone still interested in doing me harm."

"You scoundrel," answered Steve. "I suspected as much. You're probably not a good enough actor to really protect yourself in such manner."

"So you let us take all the risks in broadcasting your work?" replied Janet, rather miffed at the implications.

When Steve had earlier told Janet his suspicions of exactly such a scenario, Janet replied that Mark wouldn't keep them out of the loop. Steve admitted that if he were in Mark's shoes, he knew the fewer people who knew the truth, the safer would be his family and thus he would do the same thing.

"I'm sorry, but I suppose so," replied Mark, answering Janet while otherwise acknowledging Steve's insight.

Mark had gone over this conversation a dozen times in his head over the past year. He never came up with any response he deemed appropriate. He knew that plain admission of the truth was his only option, letting the cards fall where they may.

"Of course, it's now within your power to expose me to our adversaries if you wish," Mark offered.

“No, don’t be silly,” said Janet. “Of course we’d never do that. I just thought we were all part of a team, but it seems Steve and I were left out in the cold on this issue.”

“To the extent that is true, you are now being brought back into the middle of it,” replied Mark.

“I guess so,” answered Janet, as she became lost in thought.

Neither Joel nor Tina said anything; they were quietly monitoring the conversation as interested observers who were definitely impacted by the events being discussed.

Steve broke the thickening ice, “Well, what is it you want us to research?”

“If you’re both willing to continue forward with things, I want to investigate various activities which happened here in the District of Columbia in the 1850’s, 1860’s and 1870’s, maybe extending into Philadelphia and New York, if the trail leads us there,” Mark stated, gingerly. “I was hoping your researchers could quietly look into these local actions, in case anyone is watching me, as I’m not ready to break my silence with the public just yet.”

“What specifically do you want our researchers to investigate?” asked Steve.

“I would like the first researcher to look into public land records for Chester Adamson to find ownership records for any property he may have owned here in town, especially where he lived at the time when he was killed in 1871.

“If his home had since been rebuilt or remodeled, it would also be great to have that information, if it is available. Here is a slip of paper with questions for your researcher to examine.”

“And mine; what do you want her to do?” asked Janet, still perturbed.

“You said your researcher worked for you when you were the U.S. Treasurer and she has broad knowledge of the financial workings of the Treasury, correct?” asked Mark

“Yes, that’s correct,” confirmed former Treasurer Janet Davidson, matter-of-factly.

“If she’s willing, I’d like to see the customary fiscal practices of the receivers of the public money used under the 1846 sub-treasury system, how the Treasurer and assistant treasurers of the mints and custom-houses processed the money received and spent. Specifically, I’d like to see the transfer papers, drafts, and other documents to better understand just how that system worked.”

“I would be quite interested in knowing more about that myself,” answered Janet, softening mildly.

“Once she has that information documented, I’d like her to look at the same information, but see how it changed in the 1860’s as the national banks became the fiscal agents of the U.S. Government. Here’s my list of questions and comments for your researcher. These things may keep your researcher busy the whole time we are in town,” commented Mark.

“And what are you going to be doing while all this research is being investigated for you?” asked Janet, out of curiosity.

“Why, sightseeing, of course,” answered Mark, with a large smile on his face.

“I wanted to see if you’d admit it, which I guess you did,” answered Janet. “You’re bold, I must say.”

Penny remained silent throughout the tense conversation, almost surprised it was going so well, given the ramifications involved.

“Steve, we can meet again when your researcher has given you his initial reports for me to examine. Once I do, I’ll have more material for him to look into, if he’s willing,” stated Mark.

“That sounds fine,” answered Steve.

By this time, it was getting late, at least for Mark. Steve offered to take Mark and Penny back to their hotel and the Evanston’s obliged.

Everyone thanked Janet for being a great hostess and for the evening meal. Mark and Penny stated how glad they were to finally meet Joel and appreciated his willingness to have Janet provide her valuable services oriented in liberty.

After the two couples boarded Steve’s car, Steve stated that he was sure Janet would be ok with things in a day or two, once she had time to think things through and come to terms with Mark’s decision not to let them know about his secret earlier.

Mark commented that he disliked secrets so much that he initially didn’t want to do what he did, but it would at least contain far fewer secrets than going into hiding. “What settled my mind was thinking the next kidnapping would be Penny, or Penny and me, with Penny being tortured as I was forced to watch. I was simply too weak and injured to be able to help defend us. I knew then I had to do something I hated, in order to protect the one I love.”

“Which really surprised me,” commented Penny. “I always thought if I were ever kidnapped, I’d be a goner as the kidnappers were told by my husband that he wouldn’t negotiate with terrorists he could never trust.

“I’m not saying Mark wouldn’t willingly trade places with me or wouldn’t die trying to protect me, it’s just that he would never concede an inch to some thug who sought to force him to do something he wouldn’t ever do on his own accord, because Mark couldn’t ever trust them to then do what they promised in return.”

With Penny’s bone-chilling comments, it remained deathly-quiet in the car for the rest of the 10-minute ride back to the hotel.

As Steve dropped them off, Mark and Penny relayed that it was nice to finally meet Tina, the woman behind the man who had come to Mark's rescue the year before.

As Steve drove away, Tina commented, "It's not really safe or easy being the woman behind or beside the man with a mission, is it?"

"Well, it is perhaps less dangerous than being the woman out in front of that man," replied Steve. "I think that's what is bothering Janet."

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Monday morning in Washington, D.C. came bright and early; Mark and Penny hadn't yet adjusted to the three-hour time-zone difference. To keep up appearances, Mark didn't want to push sightseeing too hard. Late starts and early returns were prudent, especially after their long flight and dinner out the day before.

Mark and Penny ate breakfast in the hotel café and went back up to their room for several hours. After lunch, they made their first historical venture, to visit the National Archives. Mark and Penny's favorite, of course, was the Rotunda for the Charters of Freedom exhibit. Here they waited patiently for their turn to view America's founding documents — the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Bill of Rights.

Though Mark had copies of these documents on his office wall and also had posters made by direct impression on copper plate engravings created from the originals, he had yet only seen mere copies. He now was able to view the original documents which implemented the Great American Experiment of individual liberty and limited government. He was in awe of the strenuous efforts needed to forge government upon such sound and mighty principles, seemingly against all odds.

Mark reflected how that bold experiment was later thrown off its true course, undoubtedly by designing men who sought unearned profits from spurious activities.

Mark would better understand later just how true were the immortal words of George Mason. Mason, perhaps the Virginia landowner with the greatest number of slaves behind George Washington, nevertheless spoke out against slavery at the constitutional convention, warning, “As nations can not be rewarded or punished in the next world they must be in this. By an inevitable chain of causes and effects, providence punishes national sins, by national calamities.”

By allowing the very antithesis of liberty to remain within the country born in freedom for mere economic advantage of the politically powerful over the politically powerless, the seeds of destruction grew to reap mass destruction upon that noble ideal.

Although most Americans understood the Civil War as perhaps the inevitable means necessary for routing out blatant hypocrisy, slavery, Mark would later see this period as the start of the movement to begin incrementally enslaving all persons formerly free.

After eating an early dinner, the Evanston’s made it back to the hotel. After relaxing for a bit, they went for a swim in the hotel pool.

Getting back to their room, Penny called and spoke with daughter Bethany, who had remarried over the past year and was now living in the Tri-Cities in Washington. Her kids Paige and Ryan were doing just fine, though they missed their Grammy who used to stay with them every weekday while their mother worked.

Tuesday was an excursion to the National Mall. Here they saw tourists taking a guided Segway tour. Mark wished he had his colonial patriot outfit with him. He liked the stark contrast such an image would portray — clothing signifying the principles of the past, riding a unique personal transportation machine signifying technological advance and an awesome future.

The weather wasn't cooperating Thursday, so the Evanston's went to the Smithsonian Institution. At the end of the day with only a fraction of the exhibits viewed, they vowed to spend at least another day there before leaving town.

With an invitation to dinner at Steve and Tina's, Mark and Penny left in time to make that event.

Steve's investigator had his initial topics already investigated. After eating, Penny visited with Steve and Tina while Mark scanned through the material.

Steve's researcher had searched The *Washington Sentinel's* microfiche archives and found an 1871 article on Chester Adamson's murder. The picture also showed a burned-out shell of the house, which the newly-professional firefighting crew was thankfully able to save from total loss, keeping the floor and basement intact and structurally sound.

The news article detailed that Chester's throat had been cut. The reporter quoted a police officer stating that such a method of execution typically warned all others to keep their mouths shut, unlike the victim.

The researcher found Chester's home address in the land records office, having lived in Alexandria for 14 years after he built the home in 1857.

Tax record valuations indicated that the house must have been rebuilt in 1872 by new owners who had purchased the land and burned house shell from Chester Adamson's widow not long after the murder.

The researcher left a note indicating that the sales price of the land appeared to be at a discount from what the bare land was worth, given comparison sales of nearby parcels. The researcher indicated that perhaps Chester's family was anxious to part with the land.

Such a conclusion would coincide with family history that Chester's family left town in a hurry to start a new life on the west coast, paying strict attention to the executioner's message.

Mark thanked Steve for the information gathered even if nothing came from it.

The investigator's next assignment was to look into the oath taken by members of Congress. The initial oath was changed during and after the Civil War. Mark wanted to know more about why it had changed.

"Here is a list of questions and comments for your researcher to investigate," said Mark. "I'm also interested in the State credentials Senators and Representatives presented to Congress, both before and after the war."

"Do you know the location of the street where Chester Adamson lived?" Mark asked Steve.

"I'm sorry, I don't," said Steve. "But I can look up the street location online."

"Do you happen to have a printed map; you know, old technology?" asked Mark.

After digging through his desk, Steve found an old map of the area and showed Mark the location.

"Thanks, Steve," Mark stated as he grabbed a shipping tag which was already filled out. "Would you mind mailing this paperwork out to one of my friends who will hold it for me until I get home, so no one can easily determine I'm investigating anything?"

"No problem," said Steve. "I understood your motives when I read your first letter. I have several boxes and larger envelopes here as you asked. I'll ship this first envelope tomorrow morning."

"Thanks; that would be great."

After Steve relayed that he would give his researcher his new assignment, Mark thanked him for his help, the meal and they said good-bye.

After returning to the hotel, Penny called her son Blake to see how the Banning clan was doing. Penny also spoke on the phone with Bart, Gary and Bolton, but youngest Garrett was too young yet to talk on the phone.

Three activities were scheduled for Thursday's agenda; sightseeing, lunch with reporter Sarah Jacobs, and locating Chester Adamson's home to see if they could search for treasure.

After eating breakfast, Mark and Penny took a cab to the U.S. Capitol building. There Penny pushed Mark around in his wheelchair as he took photographs of the majestic buildings and beautiful scenery. They cut their tour short to have lunch with Sarah Jacobs.

They arrived at the café and ten minutes later they were seated at a table. Sarah arrived in a few minutes and they chatted a bit before examining their menus.

After their waitress brought them water and took their orders, Sarah asked how the past year had been for them.

"It has gone fairly well," answered Penny, "even if things are moving rather slowly yet."

Neither Mark nor Penny let on about his true current condition, since Sarah was in the middle of another large story and didn't seem to have much time for them while they were in town.

"I have to admit Mark that my article on your research really put me on the map in my profession," volunteered Sarah. "It has been great for my career."

"And your work helped put my work on people's radar," Mark replied.

“Washington, D.C. was in quite the uproar, especially at first,” said Sarah. “Things seem to be calming down now, though.”

“What’s the general mood of the city?” asked Penny.

“Are you asking if you two should be keeping a low profile while you’re in town?” Sarah asked.

“Not really; but now that you mention it, should we?” answered Penny.

“Oh, I don’t think anything like that is necessary. I haven’t heard any ‘kill the messenger’ type of comments.

“Well, that is certainly a relief,” replied Penny.

Figuring it best just to listen, Mark didn’t offer a lot of talk during the meal.

Saying she hated to eat and run, Sarah said she had to get her nose back to her grindstone. They said their good-byes and how nice it was even for a quick visit.

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After leaving the restaurant, Mark and Penny caught another cab, which took them past Chester Adamson’s old house in Alexandria. The cabbie dropped them off by a nearby set of stores as they requested.

After paying the cab driver, they went through several stores before heading back to the small, two-story house which once belonged to Chester Adamson, Mark’s fourth great-grandfather.

Neither Mark nor Penny noticed anyone following them since they had arrived in Washington, D.C., even as they carefully kept their eye out for unusual activity.

Approaching the ancestral home, they saw a narrow set of windows along the bottom of the house which evidenced a basement. A nicely-kept storage shed was out back, and the landscaping was immaculately kept.

Mark pushed his wheelchair up the walkway towards the front porch while Penny walked up and knocked on the door of the house which looked as if no one was home. There was no answer.

A neighbor who was on her front porch the next house over volunteered loudly, "Floyd and Jennifer are both at work today, but they are typically both home on Fridays and the weekends."

Mark and Penny nodded, not really wanting to shout to everyone in the neighborhood. Instead they went over to the neighbor's.

"I was just investigating the old home of my fourth great-grandfather who used to live here long ago," offered Mark, as they approached the neighbor's porch.

"When was that?" asked the neighbor.

"He built the place in 1857, and the property sold out of the family in 1871."

"My, that is a long time ago," commented the neighbor.

The three chatted briefly before Mark offered that he and Penny would try stopping by the following day to see if they could catch up with the current owners.

"I'll let them know you were here and are planning on coming back, if I see them," offered the neighbor. She was quite friendly; she was one of those neighbors who wasn't overly nosy but who yet monitored the pulse of the neighborhood.

"You needn't exert yourself on our account," replied Mark, not wanting the neighbor to have to go out of her way.

"If I see either of them I'll let them know; if not, you can surprise them tomorrow," offered the neighbor.

“Fair enough,” offered Mark, before he and Penny travelled the short distance to the nearby Metrorail station and boarded it to head back across the river to their hotel for a quiet evening.

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The Evanston’s grabbed their shoulder bags and met Janet at her home Friday morning for a review of the initial paperwork her researcher had found. Joel was out at the golf driving range that morning, so the three had the house to themselves.

After examining the paperwork at the kitchen table for a few minutes, Mark asked Janet for her professional insight to help clarify matters.

After 30 minutes examining the papers together, Mark gave Janet another card with questions for the investigator to investigate. He wanted to know more about the income and expenditures of the government during the 1850’s, 1860’s and 1870’s.

Giving Janet a mailing label, Mark asked her to mail the current information to one of his Vancouver contacts.

Janet said it would be no problem. She informed Mark that she would be leaving on Sunday for seminars the following week. Steve would be meeting up with her for the second two events, on Wednesday and Friday.

Mark and Penny said good-bye to Janet and thanked her for her help and wished her a safe and successful trip the next week.

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After they left Janet's, the Evanston's took the Metrorail over the Potomac River and made several brief stops, including a stop at the Pentagon. They also visited Old Town in Alexandria before returning to Chester Adamson's old house.

Mark again carefully watched to see if they were followed without being too obvious that he was looking, but didn't notice anything unusual.

After wheeling up to the front porch, Mark stood up and put his wheelchair to the side and knocked on the door, with Penny at his side. The door opened and both Floyd and Jennifer Tompkins answered the door.

Introducing themselves, Mark relayed that his great-grandfather's great-grandfather had built the house in 1857, but the place had been sold out of the family's ownership in 1871. He didn't bring up that Chester had been murdered, or the original house badly burned, not wanting to alarm the new owners if they knew none of the story.

Floyd invited them in, saying their neighbor had mentioned that a middle-aged couple had been by the day before and the purpose of their visit. Both Floyd and Jennifer seemed quite pleased Mark and Penny stopped by, as they were intrigued to know more about the family who had built the home.

After talking for a half-hour, Mark gingerly brought up the purpose for his visit, beyond his mere curiosity. He mentioned his own experience of finding buried treasure in his family home, without going into great detail.

Mark mentioned it was faintly possible that his fourth great-grandfather had built a similar cache in his home and that there was thus a remote chance something could still be hidden there. Mark clarified that he wasn't looking to claim any treasures, but was only interested in any of the old documents and research which may also be located therein.

After mention of possible hidden treasure, Floyd and Jennifer understandably became quiet and protective, to no surprise. Again, Mark clarified that he wasn't interested in any valuables which would be the current owner's to keep, but that he would like any handwritten notes which were written by Chester Adamson and any documentation that went along with it.

Floyd immediately asked the logical question, "Why shouldn't we just look for the treasure and keep it all to ourselves?"

"First of all, I'm not sure there is any. But if there is, I wouldn't be making any claim on any treasure trove, so I'd perhaps be helping you find what maybe you couldn't easily find on your own.

"Second of all, any items intentionally stored but later found which are not gold or silver coin or currency are typically treated as 'misaid' items, which are generally held by the courts for the true owners and their heirs.

"But mainly, I don't necessarily think you would be interested in the information I'm interested in anyway.

"Basically, working together, we'd be more likely to make a discovery and the two parties who would have claim to anything discovered would already have agreed how to split it. The matter would be kept out of the court where the only parties who win are the attorneys as their hefty legal fees drain away the value of the discovery. You would have immediate access to that value rather than it being tied up in court for who knows how long," said Mark.

"Tell me again what you're after, if not any valuable treasure," asked Floyd.

"My interest is in any writings of Chester Adamson, or in any written evidence he may have accumulated which supported his research into government being lead away from strict construction of the whole Constitution," replied Mark.

“So you’re saying that anything else we find is ours to keep, right?” asked Jennifer.

“Yes, that is correct,” replied Mark.

“Are you willing to put that in writing?” asked Floyd, walking to get a pen and paper.

“Of course,” replied Mark, as Floyd quickly wrote out the intent of such agreement and signed it, along with his wife.

Floyd gave the contract to Mark and Penny for their signatures. Mark also signed the paper in his capacity as the power of attorney for his father Vincent.

Floyd made a copy on his small copier for Mark and Penny, keeping the original.

“If you’d prefer to have your attorney involved, I would understand,” stated Mark, though he was definitely hoping to avoid a delay which probably only stood in the way of a quick resolution to anything.

“No, in business I now try to work out a mutually-beneficial arrangement with the other party for a win-win situation, avoiding any legal issues we can. If something is more complicated than I can handle, then I’ll bring in the attorneys.

“But I discovered the hard way that trying to keep everything for myself and not leave anything on the table for anyone else can cost me a whole lot of money and heartache,” stated Floyd. “Let’s look for some treasure!”

“My best guess is anything valuable Chester may still have in this home would be down in your basement. That is where I found his great-grandson’s hidden treasure.

“Chester’s heirs may not have knowingly understood the manner of how Chester constructed his hidden cache, but still could have perhaps otherwise picked it up when they were very young. That

seed may have been sufficiently planted such that when it came time for them to consider building their own hiding spot, they may have thought of the same construction method. Thus I'm hoping the great-grandson's method for making a hiding place may still have been handed down, helping me find the great-grandfather's cache more easily," offered Mark.

"Are you able to walk downstairs ok?" asked Floyd, noting that Mark walked slowly while his neighbor had said the male visitor the day before had been in a wheelchair, which Floyd had seen outside.

"As long as it has a sturdy handrail, and I walk slowly," Mark replied.

The two couples walked down into the basement. Mark looked at its construction. It was very similar to his great-grandfather's original home, with a brick foundation two foot high off the ground. From the foundation was a 30" wide bench which came in towards the interior of the basement, which then dropped four feet to the basement floor for barely-sufficient headroom only within the interior of the basement.

The horizontal storage shelf and vertical wall had a skim-coat of concrete hand-trowelled over the dirt to keep things tidy.

Floyd and Jennifer had the shelf areas fairly full of stored items.

"Please excuse the mess; we don't come down here much," offered Jennifer.

"It looks quite neat and tidy to me," answered Mark.

One-quarter of the house had only a crawlspace, without a basement. One of the two interior shelf areas fronting that crawlspace, at right-angles to one another, had a concrete block wall recently built in front of the original wall.

The new wall was obviously built to reinforce the old wall, providing evidence the original concrete skin must have given way.

Sitting in the opposite corner from the crawlspace was a large wood-burning furnace which Floyd commented wasn't being used any longer. The metal access door to the fire box sat up about two feet off the basement floor. The furnace was built-in, with brick all the way to the ceiling.

"Well, if tradition holds out, any treasure belonging to Chester Adamson would likely be found in that corner crawlspace, or perhaps somewhere in your furnace's brick walls," replied Mark.

"It seems more likely that it would be in the corner crawlspace as it is less accessible, so I'll start looking there. Feel free, however, to start looking at the fireplace for any loose bricks. Of course, you may come into the crawlspace with me if you prefer."

"I don't think anyone has been in that crawlspace for the better part of a century," replied Floyd. "I peeked in there before we bought the place, but truthfully it freaked me out a little bit. I'd prefer to stay out of there, if you're willing to go in by yourself."

"Penny, may I please have my gear out of your bag?" asked Mark, as he grabbed his coveralls out of his shoulder bag.

Penny pulled out his gloves, sock hat, dust mask, screwdriver and small flashlight that they had brought along in case Mark would need them. Floyd went to grab an electric lantern he had in the upstairs closet for emergency backup use and a short step-stool to help Mark get up on the shelf.

Mark put on the gear and climbed up the stool and onto the shelf. He opened the small access hatch through the foundation wall and flashed his light into the cobweb-filled void. He grabbed a nearby wooden stick and used it to knock down all the many cobwebs and to send the spiders scurrying.

The space looked promising, Mark thought, as he crawled inside. Penny thought it looked creepy.

Surrounding the perimeter floor of the crawlspace interior footing were two courses of bricks laid perpendicularly to the wall, in sand, like a brick patio. Mark tried to think if such a construction technique would have any real purpose.

He surmised that perhaps it was an attempt to minimize moles or rats burrowing tunnels in from outside. Though that perhaps made sense for the two exterior perimeter walls, it wouldn't necessarily make as much sense for the two interior walls fronting the adjoining basement area.

Mark hoped the loose brick were really to hide access into the area beneath the adjoining basement shelf which had been hollowed out for a hidden cache like his great-grandfather had built. Since one of the walls fronting the crawlspace had been re-built with concrete block, he figured the remaining wall had been built with a thicker skim-coat of concrete to support a hidden void, reasoning that is why that particular wall better-withstood the test of time.

Pushing the screwdriver down in-between the spaces between the bricks, Mark began his investigation for hidden voids.

Under a thin layer of sand was a hard layer of dry dirt. Mark was only able to push the screwdriver into the dirt maybe a sixteenth of an inch. Afraid he wouldn't be able to distinguish the hard dirt from a metal or wooden cover plate, Mark asked for a hammer and narrow chisel, if Floyd had any which could be used in such a purpose.

Most of the bricks adjoined one another fairly tightly and thus Mark had to first pry them up and move them aside before he could test for hard surfaces with the thicker chisel Floyd brought him.

Mark continued digging along the interior crawlspace wall, about four feet from the outer perimeter wall, when the chisel hit something hard beneath the surface. Mark pried up the next two feet of bricks and set them aside. He then pulled the sand away from the footing and wall, finding two wide boards about 18" long, covered with a thin rusting metal skin.

“I may have found something,” Mark hollered out in excitement.

“What is it?” asked Floyd, getting up from his investigation of the furnace and walking over to the crawlspace access.

“I found a cover plate beneath the brick. I’ll be able to pull it up in another few moments,” said Mark as he was finishing scraping off all the sand.

“Yes, I’ve found a hidden void,” yelled Mark as he pulled back the plate and saw a hole below.

Shining his flashlight into the void, Mark could see that it extended under the adjacent basement shelf area.

He saw a canvas-wrapped object in the void. It wasn’t any too heavy, which was perhaps bad for Floyd but perhaps good for Mark. Mark pulled out the item and set it beside him and peered back into the void which was now empty.

“Yep, I’ve found something,” Mark hollered to the excitement of those standing in the basement.

Picking up his discovery and setting it beside him, Mark scooted several feet closer to the crawlspace access hole, repeating the process until he made it back to the small access door.

“Here you go Floyd, open it up and let’s see what’s in there. I’ll warn you, though, it is none too heavy, which would better signify gold or silver,” commented Mark, after he raised up his dust mask.

Penny and Jennifer leaned over Floyd’s shoulders as he unwrapped the frail covering, finding an old, brittle leather satchel with the name ‘Samuel Dempsey’ struck on the front.

“Samuel Dempsey?” stated Floyd. “I thought your ancestor’s name was ‘Chester Adamson’?”

“It is,” said Mark. “I don’t know anyone named ‘Samuel Dempsey’.”

Floyd unhitched the flap to find that the satchel was lined inside with some type of loose linen which was yet in decent shape.

As Floyd opened up the fabric, Penny could smell the familiar musty stench that had been found on Mark Adamson's papers. Despite the smell, she found this discovery much more exciting, since she was in on the finding itself and anxiously awaited the results of the first peek.

Jennifer's nose immediately began to twitch and wrinkle, before she let out a sneeze, "Ahchoo."

"Bless you," offered Penny.

"Jennifer has terrible allergies," replied Floyd.

"Those papers really stink; we need to keep those papers wrapped up," replied Jennifer.

"Ok," her husband replied, "but I thought I heard a little clanging around, like there may have been some coins also, so let me set this journal and loose documents aside and dig in here."

Floyd lifted the papers out of the way and placed them on the concrete shelf beside the old briefcase. He saw a small canvas bag at the bottom and opened it up. Yes, it was coin.

Gently pouring out the contents, he found that there were three gold eagles, eight half-eagles, and four quarter-eagles, dated between 1845 and 1868.

"We found gold!" exclaimed an excited Floyd, as he first gave Jennifer a great big hug and a kiss and then Penny. He seemed inclined to approach Mark next, but he was yet out of reach up in the crawl space. "That sure didn't take long. To think this treasure was here all along, wow!"

"Congratulations," said Mark.

"Thank you," offered a thrilled Floyd.

“You bet,” said Mark. “Thank you for allowing me to search. Do you want me to cover everything back up in here, or do you want me to leave it open for you to look at?”

“There isn’t anything else in the cache?”

“Nope, that’s it,” replied Mark.

“Go ahead and cover it all up, but leave one brick off to mark the spot.”

“Ok. I’ll do that and be out in a few minutes.”

Mark replaced the dust mask over his mouth and nose and crawled back to the hiding spot. He placed the lid back over the void and put the sand back over the plate and leveled it out. He then placed the bricks back in place, one-by-one, leaving the center brick of the outer row over the lid off to mark the location of the hidden plate.

“Ok, Floyd, here are your tools you let me borrow,” offered Mark, after he climbed out of the crawlspace.

“Thanks,” said Floyd, as he helped Mark as he climbed off the shelf bench, back onto the basement floor where Mark started to brush off but then thought better of it, not to stir things up for Jennifer.

Removing his hat, mask, and gloves, Mark gave them and the tools to Penny, while he put his coveralls in a plastic bag and into his shoulder bag.

“Well, let’s go up and see what we have,” Floyd offered.

The four treasure hunters walked back upstairs and went into the dining room. Jennifer placed an old clean towel across the table and then stepped back to watch from the kitchen door while Floyd put the leather case and documents on the table.

Scanning through the documents, Mark found the bound journal with the name ‘Chester Adamson’ written across its inside cover.

“Yes, I knew the information had to belong to Chester; but I don’t have any idea who was Samuel Dempsey. I’m sure the documents must provide that information.”

Some of the documents were hand-written notes with dates, while others were affidavits. Mark noticed several pages of a hotel registry sign-in sheet cut out of its binding.

From the initial scan, they looked like they were exactly what Mark was hoping for, though it was tough yet to know their significance. Nevertheless, undoubtedly they were important enough for someone to take Chester Adamson’s life and set his house on fire.

“Ok, that’s enough of the documents,” Jennifer informed her husband. “Let’s wrap them up before I have to move out.”

“We can get going if you want these papers out of here,” offered Mark, not wanting to overstay his welcome, since he had his papers.

“Can I get your name and number in case I have any questions for you?” asked Floyd, as he wrapped the documents back up and put them in the old briefcase.

“Sure, you have my name already on our contract; I’ll just add my phone number,” which he did.

“How about your email address?” asked Floyd.

“I don’t have one, sorry,” replied Mark, who gave up internet usage nearly a year before.

“You don’t have an email address in this day and age? I don’t know if I could function without one.”

Looking again at Mark’s name and phone number, a light bulb suddenly clicked in Floyd’s mind.

“I’m sorry, it didn’t dawn on me until just now; you are the same Mark Evanston who discovered his family’s treasure which included his great-grandfather’s monetary research. You’re the guy who has

been helping bring America back under the Constitution, aren't you?"

"Guilty as charged," acknowledged Mark.

"But I thought you had significant brain injury; you don't seem to be any too impaired to me."

"I could be better, but I've improved over the past nine months. Still, however, I would ask you to say little of this matter to anyone else; I'm not ready to walk out into the focus just yet."

"You are here researching more of the same type of information?" asked Floyd.

"Exactly. I'm hoping this information helps shed more light on a very dark period in American history, so that the bright Beacon of Liberty may keep shining for evermore and never again dim."

"Well, if that is the case, I'd like you to keep the gold also," remarked Floyd, to a very shocked wife.

Floyd's history was initially that of a hard-nosed businessman who never gave an inch. Three years before however, he mellowed when he finally resolved a long-standing business dispute which cost him hundreds of thousands of dollars and five years to settle. His approach to life softened after that experience began causing significant health concerns.

"No, we couldn't accept that gold. It is yours to keep, as we agreed," replied Mark, thanking Floyd otherwise for his generosity.

"I insist. It will be my contribution towards your research which helps out all freedom-loving Americans, including Jennifer and me."

"You may have helped me more than you could ever know, by reuniting me with my fourth great-grandfather's research that got him killed. We aren't interested in the gold; you may keep it as your just reward."

“What, he was killed?” asked Jennifer, hearing nothing else but Mark’s ominous words.

Mark hadn’t meant to disclose that information to the current owners of Chester’s old house. He was really never any good at keeping secrets; he didn’t really have sufficient memory or street-smarts to remember what he was or wasn’t supposed to say and when.

He wasn’t seeking to overtly hide Chester’s history from them, but neither did he wish to trouble them with more information than they perhaps cared to know.

But there was simply no putting the cat back in the bag once it was out.

Mark had slowly come to realize that not everyone cared to learn new information which inevitably imposed upon them perhaps unwelcome burdens of responsibility.

It was the old ‘Ignorance is Bliss’ ideology. In modern superhero language, it was the principle, “With great power comes great responsibility.”

Those biblically-inclined knew it better from Jesus’ words in Luke 12:48, “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required.”

The bottom line was that with knowledge of a serious wrong comes an inevitable duty to help resolve it and not everyone wishes to expend their limited energy or resources towards such purposes.

“Yes, family lore has it that he was killed to keep him from disclosing his research, that research which I hope is right here in these documents,” stated Mark.

“If that research is that important, you can bet we won’t be saying anything about it to anyone,” offered a rather nervous Floyd.

“In that case, I don’t want us to keep any of that gold either,” offered Jennifer. “Keeping that gold could only draw us attention

that we in no circumstances would want. We are doing quite well financially on our own. Even if those coins were worth a million dollars, I'm not willing to risk our personal safety for financial prosperity we already have in relative abundance. Please take everything, including the bag and leave, now, immediately. If anyone should ask, you just came here to see your ancestral home and we gave you a short tour and talked a bit."

"Understood," offered Mark, gathering up the satchel and sealing everything in plastic and putting it in his shoulder bag.

"So it doesn't look like we left with more than we came, may I just leave my coveralls with you?" asked Mark. "I don't think there is any way to trace them back to me. You could discard them if you didn't want to keep them."

"Yes, that would be fine; I understand your concern," said Floyd. "Here's the gold coin. I wish you and Penny the best. Your secrets are safe with us, rest assured. We appreciate what you are doing for our country, but we wish to avoid undue personal danger."

"Understood; thank you and the best of luck to you," Mark offered as Penny said good-bye. "I didn't mean to cause you any trouble. I don't think anyone has followed us or that anyone would ever know our interest in this house. We were quite careful to avoid drawing attention to ourselves."

"I'm glad to hear that," said Floyd as he began closing the door behind them. "Good-bye and good luck."

As Mark held onto the shoulder bags, Penny pushed him in his wheelchair towards the Metrorail station to go back to their hotel, commenting, "I think you may have really freaked Jennifer out."

"I think you are right," replied Mark. "I don't think they are in any danger. No one today would know why we were at their house, even if they did happen to follow us. And even if someone figured out it was Chester's house, they wouldn't likely know what we were

searching for or that we found it. And Floyd and Jennifer aren't about to say anything to anyone. We will be leaving town in a few more days and we won't be contacting them again. They should be safe."

Mark and Penny didn't speak of Chester's research papers on Metrorail or even in their hotel room.

Paranoia gets old rather quickly, Mark was realizing.

Opening up his shoulder bag, the musty stench of 140 year old papers began to fill the room before Mark closed the bag back up.

Penny retrieved the air fresheners they brought for that purpose and handed them to Mark, hoping if he brought out just one item at a time that it would not overwhelm them.

"I'm getting hungry, how about you?" asked Penny.

"Yes, I am," Mark replied.

"Are you ready to grab something to eat?" she asked.

"No, not yet," Mark answered, pointing to his papers.

"Do you want me to go and grab some food and bring it back here?" asked Penny.

"No, let's just order lunch from room service."

"Room service, huh? I don't *ever* recall you springing for room service," said Penny.

"I don't want you going out on your own and I'm not up for leaving yet, so I guess that means room service."

Penny ordered lunch and it was soon brought up to them.

Chapter Four

As Penny began reading one of her novels after lunch, Mark continued reading Chester's 140-year-old journal, figuring it would best provide navigation of the loose documents in Dempsey's satchel.

Chester Adamson's journal began with a comment dated January 16, 1871. He wrote that before January 12th, that he had been but a farmer, brick mason and part-time notary public thankful that the country had survived the recent internal war.

Writing that he had been summoned on January 12, 1871, to the house of Samuel Dempsey as that 68-year old neighbor lay on his death-bed, Chester wrote that he initially figured he was being summoned to witness Dempsey's last will and testament to dispose of his property.

In a sense, Chester was right. However, this last testament did not deal with all of Dempsey's property, only his most dreaded.

Samuel Dempsey and Chester were by no means close friends. They had met four years earlier, by chance, after the war ended.

They talked occasionally over the intervening years when they saw one another, but nothing much more than idle chit chat. Chester never realized that after meeting him, Samuel began casually inquiring about him with other townsfolk.

Samuel Dempsey had never before or since met a more noble and honest man. Other people spoke about Chester in the same general manner, of his impeccable moral character.

It was imperative for Dempsey to find a trustworthy individual to tell his story, as none of his cohorts could ever be entrusted with such vital information and overwhelming responsibility.

Once Samuel found out Chester was a notary, he figured he could have his confession signature notarized and kill two birds with

one stone; the disinterested witness could later become or, if need be, find the raconteur, the narrator of Samuel's final story.

After being summoned by Dempsey's grandson, Chester grabbed his notary seal embossing press, ink well, and quill pen and saddled his horse and rode alongside the boy to the Dempsey residence, a 30-minute brisk ride further away from town.

Although he lay on his deathbed, Samuel Dempsey nevertheless came back to life as Chester walked into the bedroom which had the pungent odor of death in the air.

Sitting in the room with his father was Samuel's son.

"Grab my satchel under the bed," Samuel commanded him, in his strongest tone which remained, which was a small fraction of what it once was, "and then leave us so I may soon rest in peace."

Samuel's family knew enough to know that they didn't want anything else to do with Samuel's papers; knowing full well that Samuel himself had never wanted them.

"Besides supporting documents," Samuel began slowly, talking with Chester, "you'll find two deathbed confessions. The first belongs to Payton Phillips, which I witnessed along with a neighbor who has since died.

"The other confession is my own, if you would please find it."

Chester found Samuel's undated and yet-unsigned confession, lying atop the papers. Chester placed the satchel underneath the paper for support and filled his quill pen with ink and handed it to Samuel for his signature.

The confession had obviously been written several years earlier, when his hand had been far steadier. Dempsey signed it.

Taking the affidavit, Chester dated it and then witnessed Dempsey's signature with his own and embossed the confession document with his notary seal.

"I plead with you to make my papers public, or find someone who will," began Dempsey, "if you can find the courage of a mountain lion."

"What is their topic?" asked Chester, simply, of the unusual request.

"They expose an evil plan to destabilize the country for immense private gain."

Not realizing the ramifications of Dempsey's gross understatement, Chester nevertheless answered, "I will read through them, and if I feel it is proper to broadcast the information, I will do so. If I know of anyone more appropriate, I will contact them."

"I may now rest in peace; the satchel and papers are now *your* responsibility," said the man with only a few days left to live, as a calm expression developed on his countenance.

Chester thought it odd, but it was as if Dempsey had just confessed his sins of the world and had restored his lost soul. It looked as if he was no longer destined to eternal torment such as he had faced over the last two decades of his life here on earth.

Chester asked Samuel Dempsey if he was right with God. Dempsey answered that he was now, as he finally did what he felt God had so long wanted him to do.

After saying a prayer over him, Chester left the room with the satchel and papers. Chester relayed to the family in the outer room, who all understood that he would be taking Dempsey's most important possession with him, that he'd be praying for them and Samuel.

Riding his horse home, Chester thought through the afternoon's odd twist of events. He had little idea of the contents of the documents found in the bag he clutched. Knowing it had something to do with Payton Phillips, however, Chester concluded that it was likely nothing but trouble.

After brushing his horse down and putting him away in the barn, Chester cleaned up for dinner, which his wife had waiting for him. After the table was cleared of the dinner plates and wiped down, Chester got out the documents and began looking through them by light of the lantern.

§ § §

Mark looked up from reading Chester's notes, snapping back to reality, after he heard their hotel phone ring.

Penny picked it up. It was Bethany checking in to see how things were going. The two gals talked for a few minutes before hanging up.

"How's everything with Bethany and the kids?" Mark asked.

"Everything sounds pretty well," Penny responded. "It was great to talk with Paige and Ryan. They are growing up so fast. I sure miss them."

"I know. Perhaps we could go visit them once we get back into town. I'm sure you won't protest."

"No, I don't imagine I would ever protest seeing my little grandbabies."

"They're not quite so little, any more."

"I know, but that is still how I think of them."

"Well, maybe you may yet have a chance to see more little ones; perhaps Bethany and Brad will have kids of their own."

"I was thinking the same thing."

"It's like my grandfather used to say, 'may all your troubles be little ones'."

Reading Chester's next journal entry, Mark began learning of the contents of Payton Phillips' April 14, 1849, deathbed confession.

The name 'Payton Phillips' was a name out of the history books which Mark briefly recalled. The man had been a rabid 1840's abolitionist whose detest for slavery knew no bounds. He was a firm believer in the end justifying any and all means.

The primary story Mark could recall about Payton Phillips was his demise, that he had been shot in the back and killed long before the slaves were later freed. Mark knew nothing before of Chester Adamson's postmortem tie to Payton Phillips.

Historians naturally suspected that militant slavery supporters killed the fanatic abolitionist whose own tactics were thought to include murder and mayhem. Rumor had it that Phillips had furtively supplied a number of slaves with weapons to kill their masters.

Commonly-accepted folklore suggested a surviving family member got his revenge against the militant anti-slavery fomentor. This was certainly a credible story, as at the time of Phillips' murder, several family members of slain slave owners lay in prison for their attempted murder of Phillips a year earlier. The plan was thwarted by Phillips' personal bodyguards who were always with him when he was in public.

Setting aside Chester's ledger, Mark found Phillips' deathbed confession. Mark glanced through it quickly. He saw on the sixth and final page three signatures; that of Phillips and two witnesses — Samuel Dempsey and the neighbor Dempsey noted who had since died. The three men initialed each of the front pages.

Chester's entry on January 17, 1871, detailed that Samuel Dempsey's affidavit and confession were made to set straight the

historical record, admitting that Samuel had originally lied to protect himself.

Samuel Dempsey's affidavit cleared up his old story that Payton Phillips was already dead when he arrived at the Dempsey household. Phillips had actually arrived at Dempsey's place mortally wounded but was nevertheless able to relay Phillips' whole story to Dempsey, who wrote out Phillips' confession as it was relayed to him. Phillips then signed the document before the witnesses and died later that evening.

Payton Phillips' confession told the story of his connection with Charles Cunningham III.

That name, 'Charles Cunningham', seemed quite familiar, but Mark couldn't immediately place it. He knew it was a name tied to wealth, but was thinking it was a current name, not a name out of history.

A few minutes later it dawned on him, as he recalled comments made by Sarah, Janet, and Steve at his birthday party earlier in the year. The three had reported that a wealthy middle-aged man named Charles Cunningham had likely fled the country, but was being sought to appear before a congressional committee looking into Mark's research findings.

After thinking about this individual, Mark suddenly remembered where else he had heard that name. When he had been recuperating in the Tacoma hospital just before last Christmas, he had recognized a photograph of Alexis Roberts in a local newspaper with her new fiancé, Charles "Duke" Cunningham VIII.

Alexis Roberts had been one of the legal assistants initially helping defend the discovered Adamson/Evanston gold from the government's unjust claim. Alexis was fired after she had given a copy of Mark's monetary writings to the deputy prosecutor to advance her stalled career.

It hadn't occurred to Mark before that moment that the Charles Cunningham sought by Congress was perhaps the father of the Duke Cunningham who was marrying Alexis Roberts.

Here now was a 'Charles Cunningham' directly tied to some yet-unknown activity which had obviously scared a man whom Chester noted wasn't known to easily scare. Mark didn't figure this repetition of names to be mere coincidence, especially as the young man from the present day was Charles Cunningham 'the Eighth'.

What Mark did not know then but would later discover was that the modern-day Charles Cunningham's, the seventh and eighth, were direct descendants of Charles Cunningham I.

The first Charles Cunningham had been a junior promoter and beneficiary of the first Bank of the United States. This first bank chartered by Congress in 1791 started the Cunningham fortune when he was just a young man.

This Charles Cunningham was no relation to the English naval officer of the same name who fought against American independence. The major difference between those two men of the same name was that the English officer did not pretend to be working towards America's best interests.

The American's son, Charles Cunningham II, helped obtain a 20-year congressional charter for the second Bank of the United States in 1816.

In the early 1830's during the heated political battles to re-charter that bank, Charles Cunningham III represented the family dynasty against Democratic President Andrew Jackson.

To Cunningham's utter dismay, not only did he fail to re-charter the second bank at that time, but he also failed to later establish a third bank even after the Whig political party gained control of both the White House and Congress.

Cunningham's failure to get the third bank passed in 1841 even under a Whig President and Congress is what turned Charles Cunningham III into a radical man with a sole mission.

Charles Cunningham III would have more cunning and conniving than all seven other Charles Cunningham's put together, which would be no small feat. Due to his extreme lust for wealth and power, it was certainly no surprise that he was unwilling to let the 1832-1846 political defeats get the better of him.

Besides, the family fortunes were rapidly diminishing due to his preferred lifestyle, which was wholly unacceptable to him.

Charles III desperately wanted to create a real financial empire, not like the Podunk enterprise his grandfather began, which was already running dry.

Though Charles was not royalty by birth, he certainly sought all the trappings and prestige he could obtain by wealth. He firmly ingrained such thoughts into his own son, Charles IV.

Admitting the 'Grand Idea' was his own, Payton Phillips' confession stated that he approached Cunningham on March 5, 1849, and scheduled a private meeting for March 9th.

Phillips had long been looking for heavy financial backing to broadcast his fervent anti-slavery message. It took a serious amount of money, however, to fund a nation-wide propaganda campaign, far more than he and his friends could ever have at their disposal.

Due to a complete lack of funds, Phillips had made almost no dent in anti-slavery sentiment over the past decade. He simply had to develop some way to get serious financial backing if he was ever to succeed.

He would soon realize that to succeed, he had to secede; or, more accurately, to cause secession. To conquer, he had to divide. To conquer slavery, he would have to divide the nation.

He only had one problem. The vast number of Americans, though they perhaps personally knew slavery to be repugnant, thought the topic was simply too far beyond their individual power to do anything about it.

Payton was well familiar that Thomas Jefferson had owned many slaves even as he detested their use. Jefferson's own draft of the Declaration of Independence, after all, was well known for its anti-slavery message, of slavery being an "assemblage of horrors" and the slave trade, "execrable commerce."

Payton found the example of Martha Washington more inspiring. George Washington's last will freed his personal slaves, if they should individually prefer, upon the death of his wife, Martha. Those too feeble to provide for themselves were allowed to stay in their present condition and be cared for the remainder of their days.

Yet Martha Washington was soon induced to manumit her late husband's slaves to freedom against her preference, even before her death. She understandably grew increasingly uncomfortable as his slaves gave her cold stares and murmured amongst themselves about their freedom *as soon as she was dead*.

Yes, Phillips knew he needed to induce Washington's fellow slave-owners similarly, even if they resisted the idea.

If powerful men the likes of Washington, Jefferson and George Mason disliked slavery but felt powerless to end its injustice, Payton Phillips wasn't at all surprised when all mere mortals quietly resigned themselves to believe that some matters were simply beyond their capacity to change.

Thus separates the pragmatic from the feverishly principled.

Payton Phillips did not back down from the awesome challenge which lay before him.

Unfortunately, his principles of righteousness on one hand somehow became deeply infected with a disturbing callousness and

disregard for human life so pervasive on the other hand that he could dispose of others as easily some smash, without remorse, a creepy bug.

In a February 21, 1849, newspaper article, Phillips read an account that northern banking interests had just dissolved a coalition that had long lobbied Congress for another national bank. The story relayed a quote from one of the bankers that the “sub-treasury system put in place in 1846 proved politically-impractical to battle against, given the current political climate.”

The coalition members were unwilling to waste further precious resources and efforts on a non-starter idea which no longer gained any political traction whatsoever.

The newspaper article stated that only Charles Cunningham III vowed to continue forward, on his own, if necessary, to press for another national bank.

Payton Phillips filed that story in the back of his mind. He didn't have to wait even another day before that story would become pivotal in all his future efforts, even as it would ultimately cause him to lose his life.

In the same edition of that newspaper was another article discussing California's new Gold Rush. The newspaper stated that gold proponents up and down the East Coast were heading west in droves to find their fortune in the California gold fields.

The California gold rush was on and gold fever spread far and wide throughout the hard-money camp. Many East Coast businessmen were sending business partners west to open up new branches to supply miners with needed supplies.

The implications of the two stories exploded in Payton Phillips' fiendish mind. He hatched the world-changing plan in an instant.

Payton Phillips knew well the darker side of a man's mind, as his own mind was perhaps the darkest of them all and he knew himself extremely well.

It didn't matter to Payton what he said or did as long as he could get people to act as he wanted; he realized rather early in his career that he could capitalize on the emotional passions of men. He planned in the long term but acted in the short term.

"Abolitionists who tempered their methods did so only at risk of nullifying their effectiveness," Payton admitted in his affidavit.

Moderate methods would be wholly insufficient to cause revolutionary change; Phillips knew one cannot change hundreds of years of tradition without breaking the mold.

"The status quo is perhaps the most difficult thing to ever change," Payton noted. "People like the familiar, even if it is not the best, for it is known and therefore safe. Personal comfort is an unusually-difficult obstacle for the inspired to overcome. Discomfort, on the other hand, breeds discontent and leads to change."

To create change, Phillips knew he had to create discomfort. To create monumental change, he knew he must create monumental discomfort.

It was no secret that national banks extending their paper currencies were wildly successful for the bank shareholders. Phillips had no interest whatsoever in becoming a shareholder, however. He knew such activities would merely serve to distract him from his sole target.

But, if he could partner with the bankers — *to share in their wealth*, without sharing in their activities — now that would be ideal for him.

Payton Phillips desired to take his reward in the form of directing the advertising budgets of those who borrowed money from the bankers, toward those newspapers who would publish his articles against slavery.

The State bankers desiring to become powerful national banks only needed to ensure that those businessmen who borrowed money understood that they had to buy advertising equal to at least one percent of their loan, for each year of the loan, in designated newspapers, even if the bankers had to loan the businessmen more money to do it.

The borrowers could be told that the bankers knew that advertising was money well spent and it helped ensure profits which ensured loan repayments. The bankers need not then admit their true motive to anyone.

The Grand Idea would not cost the bankers any money; if anything, it made their loan portfolios larger. The businesses borrowing money would undoubtedly be more profitable with advertising. The newspapermen would have more business and would thus be pleased to run Phillips' articles or ghost-written stories. The bankers would be repaid and Phillips would get his message out.

It was a mutually-beneficial arrangement; everyone scratching everyone else's back.

Phillips knew any number of newspapermen who would print anything which would favor their own business.

If Phillips could simply control where those businesses advertised, his plan could come together quite well; such an arrangement would be right up his alley.

His ghost-written articles would point out the inherent injustice of allowing slavery in the Land of the Free and Home of the Brave, while driving a wedge between the slave owning South and the anti-slavery North.

This wedge would create internal strife that would build year-after-year. Keeping up propaganda long enough and often enough would create a conflict sufficient to explode slavery apart once and for all, he reasoned.

If he was right, however, a growing conflict could explode apart the current government operating under strict-construction of the Constitution once and for all. Wars fought internally were doubly demoralizing and twice as costly. Divide and conquer meant devastation of the status quo which stood in the way of vast banking profits.

Payton Phillips promised Charles Cunningham III in their after-dinner meeting that his idea would raise the cost of government in the short term to immediately bring about another national bank.

He thought if they played their cards right and enough money was spent, however, it could perhaps permanently change government so the battle against hard money advocates would never again return.

Phillips told Charles III the intricate details of his plan. He noted that the sub-treasury system was now firmly in place. The result of this resolute victory was that hard-money proponents were resting on their laurels and had turned their interests to other matters — especially the new California gold rush.

With gold proponents otherwise distracted, Phillips argued banking proponents were now actually most likely to succeed, *especially if the bankers did not directly legislate for national banks.*

By instead pushing for abolition of slavery, they could help *create the need for banks.* Banking proponents wouldn't have to ever mention banking — debts incurred by a government fighting itself would soon lead to government coming to the bankers begging them to start another national bank.

Hard money proponents would never see the attack coming and thus wouldn't be in the political trenches defending their position, Phillips argued. Hard money advocates would feel sufficient ease to continue to seek their treasures in gold and couldn't respond until it was too late.

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Charles called a meeting with his hand-picked banking proponents whom he knew to be a little more radical, for March 22 and 23, 1849. He purposefully didn't give them much in the way of details, however, to provide himself with an escape route if things didn't go well at the meeting.

Charles' biggest worry was that Phillips' plan was so radical that his cohorts wouldn't go for it.

If the meeting went poorly, Charles absolutely needed Phillips so he could deny knowing Phillips' plan in detail. He could brush off the whole vile plan by pleading ignorance, hopefully without a major loss of long-term confidence among his colleagues.

Charles also needed Payton because Phillips was a master at manipulation and perhaps only he could pull off motivating the bankers to go along with his Grand Idea.

Charles opened the meeting and soon introduced Payton Phillips, whose reputation preceded him.

More than a few of the attendees looked at one another in silent bewilderment after the man's introduction, the man who was known primarily by name but little by sight.

Phillips began his presentation by telling his audience what they already knew, that war increased the fiscal demands upon government like no other activity.

Under such demands to protect life, property and government the national banks were most needed for their 'elasticity' of credit they could provide, he argued without objection.

Phillips argued generational wars had been necessary for sufficient government expenditures to create long-term debts for continuous interest payments.

Nothing else under strict construction of the Constitution, he argued, could ever be expected to raise government expenditures to the degree necessary to warrant national banks.

Bold internal improvement plans were always scaled back as costs mounted; what the bankers needed was something from which there could be no retreat.

Phillips then stated very clearly that without war, there would likely never again be any national banks as long as government was limited by the Constitution. What they needed at a minimum was a more-meddlesome government which could create more enemies.

Recapping the cold concise facts of the previous 60 years of American banking history, Phillips let the stripped-bare information ring true with his listeners.

In the aftermath of the Revolutionary War with unpaid war debts, Congress chartered the first Bank of the United States in 1791.

In time of peace in 1811, that bank's original 20-year charter expired without renewal.

In the financial aftermath of the War of 1812, Congress chartered second Bank of the U.S. in 1816.

In time of peace in 1836, the second Bank's charter expired without renewal.

In 1841, a charter for a third Bank of the United States was approved by Congress, but didn't make it past the President's veto, again in time of peace.

In 1846, even during a period of declared war, the bankers suffered their biggest setback ever as the Independent Treasury brought them crushing and humiliating defeat.

"The best-laid plans of banking advocates were *always* crushed by peace," Phillips' affidavit admitted. "But in 1846, even in the midst

of war with Mexico, you bankers lost your final battle against hard money.

“I maintain that as long as limited government under the strict terms of the Constitution remains, that the battle between bankers and gold proponents is over; that you have lost your final financial battle and your financial war is over.

“The lesson to learn from our history is to reinstate national banks with any form of permanency, that some future war must be sufficiently large enough to cause enormous government debts which cannot easily be repaid.”

Phillips ignored the fact that the sub-treasury system proved the wisdom of the separation of bank and State, even during a significant war.

Unlike the financial difficulties in the aftermath of the War of 1812 when government funds were first kept in State banks and then later in the national bank, during the Mexican War the government operated without banks and without financial difficulty, even as a third-again more active-duty military personnel became involved in that war over the 1812 war.

In his affidavit, Phillips detailed to everyone’s surprise but his own, that no one in the room raised any objections for his call for large-scale domestic war to increase government debt so another national bank could be again chartered.

Once that unspoken topic was openly breeched in private company, it could now serve as a worthy goal without any additional measure of guilt. It merely took someone brave enough to clearly state the objective.

Sadly for the bankers, Phillips argued, there was no chance whatsoever in 1849 that a recently-defeated Mexico could prove to be a significant military threat to the U.S.

America's northern neighbor, Canada, though certainly a plausible adversary a century before in the French and Indian Wars where General Washington proved his mettle, was no longer a viable enemy, Phillips argued.

Even overseas countries offered the cunning financiers no credible foreign adversary in 1849 as America then followed President Washington's Farewell advice to "steer clear of permanent alliances," which safely trusted "temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies", and which extended "our commercial relations" with foreign countries while having with them "as little political connection as possible."

Payton argued foreign intrigue in 1849 was politically improbable to foment war.

But even more important than America's enemies being sadly distant just as they were most needed, Payton argued in a language his audience could best understand, that it was not in the audience's own financial interests to share the vast amount of wealth which stood to be raised internally.

The implications of trying to induce any European or Asian country to enter into a mutually-beneficial war, Phillips noted, would mean vast concessions which would surely be necessary would make the venture unprofitable while nearly impossible to control.

With the backdrop to his plan fully laid out, Payton Phillips went over the basics of his plan.

He stated his goal was to vastly increase America's expenditures sufficiently to pressure the government to desert its sub-treasury system and resume using national banks and paper currencies once and for all.

The trick was simply to get government debt sufficiently high that compound interest would begin to work its magic and they'd

never have to look back to the 20-year re-occurring battles against hard money advocates who always won during peacetime.

It wasn't Thomas Jefferson's 'Tree of Liberty' that needed to be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants, Phillips argued, but the banker's Tree of High Finance.

If war was too great a cost for the bankers to swallow, Phillips argued that they must all admit the plain fact thoroughly borne out by American history and recede to the sidelines.

Pausing uncomfortably long, letting the impact of those words sink deep into the consciousness of every audience member, Phillips then pointed out that it was the lack of regular payments for war debts which brought about demise of the Articles of Confederation, being replaced with the U.S. Constitution.

He stated that the express words "to pay the debts" listed in Article I, Section 8, Clause 1 of the Constitution were specifically inserted to allay the growing fears of long-snubbed creditors that the new government could lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts and excises to pay the creditors their past-due notes. Phillips stated this debt obligation was expressly admitted in Article VI, Clause 1 of the new Constitution.

"If high government debts could change the form of government once, they could change the form of government again," Payton argued.

Phillips further argued that war was messy because it wasn't controlled. He argued that war could be controlled if someone pulled the strings on *both* sides. War fought in that manner could be continued long enough to ensure their plans would succeed, and then stopped promptly once objectives were met.

No longer was it necessary for wars to be so unpredictable, he argued.

By planning war, Phillips argued, they could even take the moral high road. His plan was to divide and conquer; pointing out the true and inherent evils of slavery as a just end for their collective efforts whose true ends would thus never need to be admitted.

Phillips stated that he planned to concentrate his propaganda machine in the newspapers of the North, building his anti-slavery rhetoric, year-after-year. That is where he needed the banker's help, to fund the necessary advertising by only giving loans to businesses who agreed to advertise in the designated newspapers.

Payton stated that he already had a large group of northern newspapermen who stood to profit from extensive advertising who were ready to proceed with his plan at a moment's notice.

Charles interrupted and stated that he knew of any number of northern businessmen who could benefit immensely by supplying a desperate government with the necessary implements of war, undoubtedly even taking out large loans for expansion.

These businessmen would have a ready, willing and able customer desiring to buy all the war materiel they could produce, readily assuring the bankers their compounding interest payments also from the private sector.

After Charles said his piece, he hoped he had not jumped the gun too quickly and displayed his intentions before he could take a pulse of the group's members. Still, he knew he needed to push just a little in the right direction, to make sure everyone else knew which line to toe.

The group of bankers attending the meeting didn't seem to really know which way to think until Charles Cunningham III provided them that direction. They had never heard anyone so clearly enunciate their sixty-year old business plan which a number of them had not fully realized until then.

They realized, however, that Payton was correct; that without war the national banks were finished under limited government. With a government committed to the common defense without foreign entanglements, foreign wars would be few and far between, especially as the United States continued to grow in strength.

The bankers had learned the hard way that government limited by the Constitution was not their friend.

One-by-one the audience members realized they either had to be satisfied with their inconsequential State banks issuing insignificant sums of localized paper currencies, or they had to step up to the plate and play as the big boys on the block and face the harsh realities of their profession.

Slowly, as the boldest among the attendees began signifying their agreement to Phillips' plan; those more timid soon began to go along with the flow.

If there was to be a war, better it be with ourselves as opposed to foreign adversaries with their own agenda, where there was perhaps something really to lose to others.

As everyone in attendance signified their approval of the plan to push for internal war using slavery as their only admitted means, Charles Cunningham III now realized that he no longer needed Payton Phillips.

Phillips had served his purpose of successfully motivating Charles' fellow conspirators to go along with the Grand Plan.

With unanimous banking support, Phillips was now perhaps even a dangerous threat.

Everyone else's agenda followed one common goal, *except* for Phillips. If Phillips could somehow achieve his objective without war, he would be fully satisfied. The bankers who helped fund the Grand Idea, however, would be wholly prevented from realizing any of their important dreams if war did not materialize.

No, Charles knew that war was absolutely necessary to realize their goals and that Phillips could turn on them if he could somehow realize his intention more quickly in some other manner.

Payton Phillips was now simply a loose cannon with different goals; an expendable liability.

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Under the guise that Charles needed Payton to come to Charles' hunting cabin for a private strategizing meeting, the trap was soon set.

On his way to the meeting with his two bodyguards, Payton's trusted horse suffered a deep laceration on his shoulder when Phillips hadn't noticed a broken tree branch jutting out into the narrow trail they took as a short-cut.

Charles' cabin was yet seven more miles further down the trail, while Payton's friend Samuel Dempsey's place was just a half-mile down the side path at which they soon found themselves.

One of Payton's two guards offered to swap Payton horses and take the lame horse to the Dempsey farm so the other two could continue on to the meeting, but Payton knew that Dempsey would likely shoot at first sight any obvious gun-slinger whom he did not know that came onto his property.

Showing more compassion for his horse than he ever did his fellow man, Payton walked it to the Dempsey farm and asked his friend if he could trade horses so he could continue on to his important meeting.

Samuel said it would be no problem to switch horses, as he had several, and that they could swap back in a few weeks once Payton's horse healed sufficiently to ride.

When Phillips and his men came to the final turnoff a half-mile from the hunting cabin, he had his guards wait there, telling them to keep everyone else from coming onto the Cunningham property. Payton was unwilling to bring into his grand scheme more people than absolutely necessary.

After arriving at the cabin, he tied up his borrowed horse and knocked on the door. He was ushered inside, where Charles' men immediately restrained him, grabbing his holstered pistol as Charles began relaying the change in plans.

Payton found his opportunity to escape when a curious raccoon snooping in the lean-to storage shed out back became startled by the scuffle inside and scurried away, inadvertently knocking a metal bucket off the shelf.

The loud clanging of a falling metal bucket outside startled the men inside. Payton was able to push them aside while he reached for his hidden Derringer. He got off a shot which caused his assailants to pause sufficiently to provide him a good lead as he sprinted out the door.

The two hired guns stumbled to their feet and ran out after him, shooting their revolvers. Phillips was thankful that the cabin was surrounded by an extensive number of trees which offered him a good deal of protection from their short-range pistols.

During the scuffle, Charles ran in the opposite direction from his men and Payton, to grab his pre-production Sharps rifle which was over the fireplace mantel. Charles had managed to get the handmade rifle through an investor friend as a personal thank you for Charles letting him know of a lucrative investment opportunity in his backyard which was being sought to fund full production of the impressive rifle.

Mounting his horse in an adrenaline rush for his life that made him look like a track star, Phillips sprinted his horse down the trail such that he was soon far out of the effective range of the pistols.

Tragically for Payton Phillips, however, he wasn't nearly out of effective range for which the Sharps rifles would soon become legendary. The slug from Charles' rifle hit Payton in his lower back, missing his vital organs, but nevertheless making quite a mess of his insides.

When Phillips' men had first heard gunshots, they had raced their horses towards the cabin and were soon at Phillips' side. He ordered them to kill the three men at the cabin as Payton headed for Samuel Dempsey's home.

Shooting their rifles as they raced toward the cabin; Phillips' men immediately fell to the accuracy of the Sharps rifle under a steady hand of a shooter who had his feet firmly planted on solid ground.

Charles III had never before shot a man; now he had just killed two men and mortally wounded a third. He scared himself a little over the ordeal, not because he was remorseful, but because he was not in the least. In fact, he found it rather exhilarating. It was much more exciting than shooting big game which had been his favorite past-time to date, for his quarry could and now did shoot back.

Like the family dog getting his first taste of blood after a thrilling chase and never quite being the same thereafter, Charles Cunningham III liked the hunt and taste of fresh human blood. He had crossed over that sometimes-delicate threshold which separates man from beast, from which there would be no turning back.

Payton Phillips was badly bleeding and weakening when his borrowed horse returned to its stable. It took all his strength and determination, but Phillips was able to relay his story to Dempsey, desiring his rightful place in the history books.

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In his own affidavit, Dempsey admitted he had sneaked into the lobby of the New York hotel Phillips had told him about and cut out the pages from the registry dated March 22, 1849, to provide proof of the meeting and verify the attendees.

In his confession, Dempsey wrote that he asked Phillips if the attendees would have signed the register. Phillips responded that he signed the registry not only to ensure his rightful place in the history books, but also to help document who all was there at the meeting as insurance in case things didn't go well. He didn't fully trust Charles III, after all.

Only Phillips and Cunningham actually knew the meeting's topic, so the other attendees had no reason not to sign in, Dempsey noted.

Phillips told Dempsey that when he saw Cunningham hesitating to sign the ledger, that Phillips encouraged him to sign it because five other meeting attendees were coming in the door a little ways behind them.

If Charles wouldn't sign the registry, Phillips argued that the others may become alarmed that they were perhaps someplace they should not be and may leave before ever learning the only viable path to restoring the national banks back to operation.

Phillips assured Charles that this was his only shot for success and the fault would be his own if he were too cowardly to place his name on the register.

Mark found the hotel registry sheets and looked through the names. He recognized only two; the names of Charles Cunningham III and Payton Phillips.

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Mark sat back and contemplated the wickedness he had read about that afternoon. The history he was reading certainly was not found in any book.

Mark thought of the six hundred thousand Civil War dead, nearly as many deaths in that one war as in all other American wars combined.

Mark realized now that those war deaths were but the collateral damage needed to get the Union government to spend some 13 billion dollars which it would ultimately expend on the war effort.

The government's expenditure of those 13 billion dollars was the short-term goal of Charles Cunningham III and his bankster associates.

Mark inadvertently had picked up on Chester's use of the 'bankster' phrase; a contraction of the phrase, 'banking mobster'.

After repeating the phrase and pondering Phillips' confession, Mark began to think Chester was perhaps being redundant; considering high-finance bankers, anyway — those arrogant, self-absorbed financiers a breed apart from one's local hometown banker.

The on-going enormous federal debts incurred since 1861, of course, were the real objectives of Charles Cunningham and his associates; the awe-inspiring power which would flow from those immense debt payments would be the icing on the cake.

Mark recalled Peter Dennison's story involving a few two-bit hoodlums seeking to unduly profit during the Viet Nam War by substituting cheaper protective plates so they could pocket the petty difference in material cost.

Undoubtedly, Chester's research would affect Peter Dennison most profoundly. Even the man who dedicated his life to fighting evil after seeing it on a small scale could not fail to be thrown aback after seeing its evidence on a grand scale.

It was time to stop all further research, Mark realized. He would thereafter only use Peter Dennison's research sources from then on, as Janet Davidson and Steve Fredrickson were simply far too high profile to use as research intermediaries as things suddenly turned terrifying.

It was doubtful that more than a few people ever knew the story he just learned and obviously they were all long dead. Hopefully the secrecy involved in this episode of history would ensure Mark's safety until he became ready to broadcast the information far and wide.

Mark wrapped up all of Chester's research in the plastic bag and put it back in Dempsey's satchel. Before he sealed it up, he looked through his wallet. He had five hundred dollars in Travelers Cheques left. He took out two hundred dollars worth and threw them in with the research paperwork and sealed up the plastic bag with tape.

He then boxed everything up in a flat-pack box they brought along and closed the lid. Luckily everything fit sufficiently, though he added a t-shirt to fill up the remaining void. He got out the brown paper packing tape they also brought and sealed the box. Brown paper tape, of course, readily-showed evidence of tampering far better than plastic tape.

At various places around the box on the brown packing tape Mark wrote various words with his ultra-fine Sharpie. The meaningless words written in his own hand would easily show if any of the tape had been tampered with in any manner when he would pick up the package.

He noted the approximate measurements of the box so he would be able to place it in a bag when he went to pick it up in Vancouver, keeping it better hidden from prying eyes.

He was about to place the mailing label to his most trusted friend, but he decided instead to send it to himself using his full legal name in care of General Delivery, to be picked up at his local

hometown post office. He didn't want to chance getting anyone else involved in this matter at the present time.

"Are you ready to grab dinner?" Mark asked Penny.

"Sure, whenever you are."

"Would you please bring along the small scissors with you in your purse?" asked Mark.

"Sure," answered Penny, trying to guess what Mark was planning.

Mark looked out the window. The sky was dark and ominous. He grabbed his hat from his luggage and the box and they took the elevator down to the lobby.

They hailed a cab and Mark asked the driver if there was a post office nearby. The cabbie said there was one two miles away. They arrived just before closing.

The postal clerk asked the value of the box which would now be kept under lock and key until he presented proper identification to pick it up. He told her \$200, the value of the Travelers Cheques. As far as he was concerned, the other documents were priceless, as they exposed trillions of dollars of deceit and mountains of deception scattered over seven generations.

The postal clerk gave him the registered mail receipt with its tracking label and Mark's change.

They left the building and saw a nearby Italian restaurant. After ordering their meals and getting water to drink, Mark got out his registered mail receipt.

He wrote the word 'cirographum' horizontally across the receipt, perpendicularly to the first blank space between the five different sets of numbers of the parcel tracking number. He wrote three other words at random perpendicularly to the other blank spaces between the numbered groups.

Penny gave him the scissors and Mark carefully cut up the tracking label's numbered sequences using unique serrated cuts through 'cirographum' and the other words.

He did this in honor of the ancient custom of indented chirographs; important documents uniquely cut apart which could be later brought back together and easily have their authenticity confirmed.

Early government bonds and other monetary securities used indenting for such purposes.

Mark gave the scissors back to Penny and the first set of numbers for her to put in her coin purse alongside some of their discovered gold coin which had been lightly wrapped to prevent abrasion.

Taking the ink cartridge out of his ink pen, Mark wrapped the next number set around the cartridge and put the pen back together.

He folded the smallest set of numbers and discreetly placed it under the battery of his watch.

The fourth small slip of paper containing four numbers he placed in the inner brim of his 'old man's hat'.

For the interim, Mark placed the fifth and largest piece of paper in his billfold. Once they returned to the hotel, Mark would put this piece of paper inside the lid on his can of shaving cream, after making sure first that the lid was clean and dry.

The package of critical evidence was now on its way back to Vancouver and he could put it mostly out of his mind. If the package were 'lost in the mail', chances were that his tracking number wouldn't ever do him any good getting it back anyway, as it would never be seen again.

Their enticing meals were soon delivered to their table. Mark had ordered a seafood pasta dish which was fabulous. Penny ordered a crab ravioli plate which Mark was able to finish off after she had

eaten her fill. Yes, that was another good reason to have around a woman with a nice figure.

When it got noisy in the restaurant, Mark whispered a few of the particulars of his research findings to Penny, but didn't go into great detail. She heard enough to know she didn't really want to hear any more, and was glad when Mark stated that he was done researching things in town.

They went back to their motel after dinner, staying in for the rest of the night. They watched a movie on television.

Saturday was a relaxing day on a sightseeing tour bus, getting an overview of some of the more popular sites around the area.

The Evanston's visited the National Cathedral on Sunday and attended a church service. They spent the rest of the day lounging around town.

Monday morning Mark and Penny ate breakfast with Steve Fredrickson at a local café. Mark asked Steve to stop all further research and mail what he had off to Vancouver as soon as possible, that Mark didn't need anything else researched which would only jeopardize his current work.

Steve said he was leaving town Tuesday to meet up with Janet for a seminar on Wednesday and another on Friday. He said the seminars were going well and the interest seemed to be expanding. He knew they were having impact but thought that their initial momentum seemed nevertheless to be slowing, which he could not understand.

"'Objects in motion stay in motion' and 'objects at rest stay at rest'," said Mark, relaying that Newton's laws of physics helped explain human inertia, even if not strictly. "The status quo is so very hard to change and you're up against it now."

“Evidently,” admitted Steve. “I thought we’d be further along the path to restoring freedom by now. But we seem to still have a very long way to go.”

“The great thing about human nature is that once the tyrannical enslavement beast is slain once and for all, individual liberty and limited government under the strict confines of the U.S. Constitution will undoubtedly be established for a very long time. There are simply no other effective methods for bypassing strict constitutional limits other than using the power for the seat of government in a novel way.”

Steve said good-bye after Mark thanked him and his researcher for their help.

The Evanston’s were off to a day at the Library of Congress and again at the Smithsonian. Tuesday was spent with additional time at the Capitol Building, White House, the Jefferson Memorial and the war memorials finished off their vacation.

Chapter Five

The weary travelers arrived back in Portland Wednesday evening, October 2, 2013. Blake picked them up from the airport and took them to their Vancouver apartment.

Though it was the trip of a lifetime and produced greater insight than Mark could ever have imagined, it was still nice to get home; even when home was a two-bedroom rented apartment.

Spending Thursday unpacking from their trip and settling in, Mark and Penny had dinner that evening with Blake and Daphne and the rambunctious Banning boys who were growing like weeds.

The Evanston's visited family on Friday and Saturday, especially Hannah at her home and Vincent in the Alzheimer's care facility and Penny's dad and step-mother in Battle Ground.

When they got home Saturday after lunch, their neighbor next door in the apartment who had lived there eight years told them he was moving out. He excitedly told them that he had just accepted a spectacular job that was offered to him quite out of the blue — he hadn't even applied on it — but that he had to move a few towns away to accept the position.

Wishing their neighbor the best of luck, Mark and Penny wondered who would take his place.

Mark was anxious to read further through Chester Adamson's documents which detailed the severing of America's constitutional rudder to benefit a wealthy few who cared not to compete in the free market for their profits.

He thought that it would be prudent however to wait a short while before picking up the various boxes and envelopes that were mailed back to Vancouver. He thus got caught up with various small projects around the apartment, none of which were at all important.

As Mark slowly wheeled himself back from taking the kitchen garbage out to the garbage can, he noticed the brick on the adjacent house's chimney.

Flashing back to his two favorite ancestors, he was thankful their masonry skills helped them build secret hideaways which preserved their research efforts for up to 140 years until he found the information.

It was by accident, of course, that Mark had first found his great-grandfather's cache, when he was digging around the old brick foundation to save a few bricks as mementoes after the house had been demolished to make way for a housing development.

After thinking about it, Mark was almost surprised his great-grandfather's second house, his retirement house where Mark and Penny had lived before it had been blown up the year before, had been built with a poured concrete foundation.

Pondering the difference, Mark figured there was probably little reason not to build with the stronger material, since his great-grandfather still had access to his first hideaway where his daughter and her husband then lived.

A thought suddenly popped into Mark's mind. Although Mark Adamson had built his retirement house with a poured concrete foundation, his most elaborate masonry project at the Vancouver farm was the two-story block building built adjacent to his retirement house. Though that retirement house had been bombed out the year before, the block building yet remained standing.

Mark realized that he had never examined for hidden treasure the largest hand-stacked masonry project that Mark Adamson had ever built on his Vancouver property.

Given the possibility for another hiding place in that block building, Mark Evanston knew he had to look through it to see if his great-grandfather had anything else to tell him.

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Sunday afternoon Penny drove Mark to the site where Mark Adamson's retirement house had once stood.

Upon arriving, Penny stated that she didn't really like coming back to the old site where they once lived, as it just brought back too many painful memories of Mark's abduction and seeing him lying in the hospital bed having been nearly beaten to death.

She relayed that she'd just walk up and visit Mark's mom, Hannah, who lived two houses up the private driveway. She told Mark he could drive the pickup up to his mom's place once he was ready to leave.

Mark had only been back to the old house site himself several times over the past ten months. The site had been cleaned up of debris, but was otherwise vacant except for the block building which was definitely starting to show signs of age. Mark didn't recall it looking so badly. He wondered if the house explosion had caused more issues for the old block building than initially thought.

The mortar between the red cinder blocks was cracking and one of the building's corners appeared to have settled a few inches, now casting doubt on the long-term survivability of the structure. Roots from a nearby tree were now growing through the walls in the basement where cracks had developed from shifting soils.

The building was two stories; the main floor and a daylight basement. Access to the bottom story was through two large doors on the north; one for each of the two halves of the building which were divided by an interior block wall.

Boxes used at harvest for the prunes and later pears were initially stored in the basement, as large bins moved by forklifts weren't yet in use when the building had been built.

Access to the upper floor was provided by a regular man-door on the west end. The east end had an over-sized cargo door about three-and-a-half feet up from the sloping ground, for a loading dock.

There were two windows on both the north and south walls of the upper floor, with burlap gunny sacks as curtains covering them. Since Mark didn't want anyone to know what he was doing inside the building, he left the curtains covering the windows after he entered.

There was little likelihood that the upper floor offered any hidden areas and Mark found little after an initial exam inside the building, other than reminders of the three generations of farming before him.

From Mark Adamson's era were old wooden boxes with his name 'M.H. Adamson' emblazoned on their sides. Also from this era were old 2' x 3' prune-drying screens in wooden frames, left over from the prune dryer which had burned down in the 1920's.

From Mark Adamson's son-in-law Fred Evanston's generation were a few Washington Cannery Co-op boxes. Fred Evanston had been one of the founding members of the old co-op.

Sadly, Fred's son Vincent would attempt to help support that co-op three years longer than he should have in the mid-1960's, before its final demise. Even into the third year Vincent insisted on taking their vast annual production of crops to the co-op which his father helped start even though that co-op had not paid Hannah and him for their past two years' worth of production.

Of course, farmers belonging to the co-op partnership were individually responsible for the seed and fertilizer taken out individually by them on credit, but were only able to withdraw out their proportionate share of the profits when there were any.

Thus, at the end of that failed decades-long unfortunate co-op experiment, Vincent and Hannah Evanston were given the opportunity to pay the co-op another \$100,000 to extinguish their

personal debts with it, even though those debts were directly incurred to grow the very produce delivered to the co-op for which the Evanston's were never paid a dime.

Mark looked back on his own failed business ventures and realized that he came by his own disconcerting inability to profit all too naturally. There always seemed to be interfering objectives which minimized profits. The apple evidently didn't fall far from the tree.

If only the Evanston and Adamson men had been a little more pragmatic, and a little less stubbornly idealistic, they may have lead more profitable lives.

Of course, if not for his stubborn loyalty learned from his father, Mark perhaps would not have pursued so persistently his favorite pastime of studying the U.S. Constitution. The two topics, stubbornness and loyalty, were intertwined in Mark like two peas in a pod.

From his parent's generation, Mark found on the main floor of the storage shed a large number of his father's old 25-pound potato sacks from the 1960's, the TAG Brand of 'They're All Gems'.

Vincent's first sacks from the 1950's traded on the Lucky Strike cigarettes' familiar 'LSMFT' ad jingles; 'Lucky Strike Means Fine Tobacco'. Vincent's sacks for storing the potatoes grown in the Lake Shore region of Vancouver thus became, 'Lake Shore Means Fine Taters'.

Though Vincent was willing to use the tobacco jingle, he only used tobacco on one cross-country jaunt back to his Army base in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to keep from falling asleep during the long drive.

In later years, he was often known to 'playfully' grab a pack of smokes in an employee's or friend's shirt pocket and crush them in his hand or under foot. Naturally, the person whose cigarettes were crushed didn't think it was quite so playful.

The reddish-brown cinder blocks which formed the walls of the block building were eight inches high by twelve inches long, and six inches thick. Unlike small brick, these larger blocks would be physically much tougher to move for ready access. Mark speculated that any hidden area behind such block would thus have to be for longer-term storage that one would seldom access.

Walking slowly and carefully around the building to the bottom side on the north, Mark walked in the east half of the basement. He pulled his flashlight out of his pocket and examined the south and east walls which rested into the dirt slope. To all appearances, the walls were solid and offered no access into any hidden areas within the dirt backdrop.

He next examined the south and west walls in the west half of the basement, finding the same results. Mark was about to give up when he realized that the wall between the two halves of the building wasn't necessarily one wall — it could easily have been made of two walls with a void in the middle.

A tape measure from his pickup could easily verify whether there was a second wall, if he compared the inside and outside dimensions.

Going up to the pickup, he grabbed the tape measure. Mark figured he should rest for a little while, in case he was being watched. He had probably pushed his luck a bit too much in Washington, D.C., but he was certainly glad he followed the leads there and took the chances he did.

Neither did he now want to give any evidence that he had any important mission now to accomplish.

After sitting in the pickup for ten minutes, he went down and measured the interior east bay of the basement, from the door jamb to the dividing wall. He then walked back out of the east bay and into the west bay and made the same measurement on that side.

Next Mark nonchalantly placed the end of the tape on the door jamb and walked to the adjacent doorjamb, measuring the distance between the two doors on the outside of the building.

The two inside distances should add up to be just six inches less than the outside wall, but Mark found that measurement to be 60 inches less — meaning there was a second six-inch block wall with a four-foot void between the *two* partition walls!

Mark went inside the building and inspected the dividing walls on both the east and west halves, but didn't find any loose block whatsoever. It didn't make sense to Mark that there would be a four foot void without access.

“What if access was from the top?” Mark thought to himself, realizing that only made sense.

Mark went back to the pickup and rested again for a few minutes. He grabbed a hammer and pry-bar, figuring he'd need them to do a little more investigation since nothing had first been readily apparent.

He went back into the upper story and looked around. He saw the built-in cabinet along the south wall which straddled the void area below. Access had to be through that cabinet.

The center cabinet was deeper and taller than the two workbenches under the windows on either side. A bigger cabinet would certainly help make it easier to climb through to access the space below, he reasoned.

Opening up the tall pair of doors, Mark removed all the adjustable shelves and inspected the cabinet bottom. It must be a false panel, he reasoned. One of the bottom boards at the back of the cabinet had a hole in it. He pulled on it but was unable to budge the board.

Examining then inside of the cabinet, he noticed that the bottom boards consisted of multiple pieces of quarter-sawn Douglas fir.

In contrast, the very visible cabinet sides and door panels consisted of flat-sawn fir.

That was interesting, as flat-sawn was a much cheaper grade of wood, as compared with the beautiful quarter-sawn look of clear vertical grain Douglas fir, with its very tight-knit annular growth rings.

The only reason Mark could think of using the better cut of wood on a less-visible interior part would be when other characteristics besides beauty were of primary significance.

Quarter-sawn wood would be much more dimensionally-stable as compared with flat-sawn wood for the unheated building. That would allow a tighter-fitting bottom which could be more-easily removed when desired, without being as likely to stick or buckle due to changes in humidity and temperature.

It would certainly be unusual in this day and age to use such nice wood in a storage building. Then again, Mark recalled his dad's older cousin telling stories of cutting up six-foot diameter 'widowmaker' Douglas fir snags in the Yacolt Burn area with an old powered buck saw for firewood, even though the interior wood was in otherwise excellent condition.

One generation's prized possessions were an earlier generation's firewood, so maybe the clue was meaningless.

Confident that the bottom must come out of that cabinet, Mark took his hammer and pry bar and carefully separated one of the wood strips in the cabinet deck. The board came up without any nails, screws or glue holding it in place.

Looking underneath, Mark saw there was no building floor beneath the cabinet deck and he could see a dark void below him. He pulled out the rest of the cabinet floorboards which now came out readily.

There was a simple metal ladder bolted to the inside of the east wall of the partition below, inside the void. This ladder was quite similar to the ladder used for climbing into and out of his old attic bedroom when he was young. It wasn't as sturdily built, however, and it was much older.

Fearing the old rusting ladder rungs may give way, Mark went back to his pickup and grabbed a 35'-long manila rope so he could throw it over an overhead beam and tie it off. Once he did that, he then threw the opposite end of the rope into the void.

He was fairly sure he wouldn't be able to climb the rope even if he had to, but it would nevertheless be in place for emergency use or to take some strain off the ladder if need be. Besides, Penny knew he was in the building and she would probably come looking for him if he didn't show up at his mother's shortly.

The protruding wooden shelf support blocks on the cabinet insides could function well as hand holds for climbing into and out of the hidden basement storage, via the ladder, Mark sound found out.

Grabbing his flashlight and tools, he kept his hands and feet spread toward the outside vertical rails of the ladder, where the rungs would be the strongest, as he climbed down. He kept at least three points of contact on the ladder at all times, on different rungs of the ladder, to avoid undue strain to any one area.

Descending until he hit the concrete floor below, Mark turned on his flashlight and looked around. There were boxes stacked throughout; two boxes wide which fit tightly between the two walls. It was hidden storage, alright, but what on earth was being stored there?

Mark pried the wooden top off the first box which looked different from the other boxes. Shining his light in the box, Mark saw that it contained hundreds of small packets of miscellaneous garden seed; sweet corn, carrots, lettuce, celery, etc., which could grow in the region.

The box below the first was sealed in wax to reduce oxygenation; Mark found it contained field corn seed. He wondered if any of it would still germinate.

Knowing that the corn had obviously been stored far longer than Mark Adamson originally intended, Mark figured that it would still be better than nothing. It could probably at least yet be cracked or ground for at least some nutritive value for cow feed, he figured.

Mark opened the top box from the second row of boxes to find wheat. Its box had also been sealed with wax. There was also some diatomaceous earth on top of some wax paper, to help reduce weevil infestation.

Grain, corn, and vegetable seeds were not exactly what Mark had been hoping to find, but he certainly understood why his great-grandfather had stored them.

He thought about the boxes of seeds and wheat his great-grandfather stored up. It followed the old adage that “one can’t eat gold.”

An ample garden, coupled with their cows, pigs, chickens, and sheep would certainly keep away any hunger his great-grandparents would have ever faced. Besides a full fruit cellar of canned pears, peaches, and their seasonal store of apples, potatoes, and dried prunes, Mark Adamson and his wife could have easily bartered away their excess with their neighbors who all knew each other well.

They actually had very little need for money, which from reading Mark Adamson’s notes and diaries, had certainly been his objective.

The one thing Mark never found was a large arsenal and stored munitions, typically among the first items modern-day survivalists talk about.

Tucked in the back of their orchard where no one could really see them, in a sparsely-populated county with their neighbors they knew

well for decades, his great-grandparents never needed much defending.

His great-grandfather had owned a 12-gauge shotgun and a .22-caliber heavy-barreled single-shot rifle, Mark recalled, which undoubtedly suited his needs just fine.

Mark remembered watching several steers getting butchered when he was young. He had found it almost unbelievable to watch a 1,000-pound steer being shot with a measly little .22-caliber bullet right between the eyes. That steer would drop in the smallest fraction of a second right where he stood. There was no quivering, shaking, or movement, other than instantaneous collapse of his four legs.

Mark also recalled stories his dad told of both Vincent's dad and grandfather during the Depression, of guys walking into the area with no particular destination in mind.

The men would be given an evening meal and allowed to sleep in the barn. Come morning the visitor would work doing some of the odd jobs always necessary on the farm and get three solid squares a day until he decided it was time to move along. There was always plenty to go around, even during the darkest depths of the Great Depression, even with the limited means of production from 80 years ago.

Eighty years ago thrifty, frugal, and hardworking Americans could store up goods for their often-large families with just one spouse working outside the home.

In contrast, even given a virtual explosion of productive capacity since, but built over an economy using a depreciating currency with an over-reaching government, today two spouses work to try and pay off debts from what they spent yesterday on their much smaller family.

And people called it 'progress'.

Realizing that the boxes wouldn't likely be providing him any research material, Mark began looking around in the void for any evidence of his primary objective.

As Mark shined the light around every square inch of the room he could access without removing all the boxes, he saw a manila envelope resting in a shelf nailed to the underside of the ceiling above, near the ladder. He hadn't noticed it on his way down.

The shelf was reachable from the upstairs floor, if a person laid down on the cabinet deck and reached in under the floor. One wouldn't even have to remove all the boards and climb in the space to access the area, he figured.

Climbing back up the ladder, Mark grabbed the envelope and climbed out of the cabinet, setting the envelope on the counter. He wound up the rope, put all the shelves back in the cabinet and closed the cabinet doors.

Opening up the envelope, he looked through the papers. It was Mark Adamson's handwritten notes. The dates on the papers were from 1944 through to the last entry on February 20, 1946. "This must be some of his last studies," Mark reasoned. Undoubtedly Mark Adamson had kept his latest work nearest him for ready access for whenever he had time to work on them.

There were sixteen pages in the packet, which looked like it contained his thoughts on fundamental American principles. They weren't compilations of progressive thoughts over many decades like his earlier information, but more of an attempt to teach basic American principles of government which were no longer well understood.

The information looked more important for his next book, not his current project; Mark thus would put the papers aside for a distant rainy day.

Seeing a sagging shelf on the north wall, Mark threw the rope around the rafter above and tied then it off under the protruding shelf support. He left the rope in place as if that had been his project for the day and grabbed his tools and put the papers under his coat, before driving up the driveway to visit with his mom for a few minutes until Penny would take them home.

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While sitting at his desk Monday morning, Mark began contemplating what he recalled from what he had examined of Chester's documents.

Even after only a brief contemplation of Chester's conclusions, it made quite a bit of sense to Mark that the abolition of slavery was simply an effective means to a hidden end.

It was human nature to care more about one's own interests over someone else's. People are seldom motivated to action by principles alone, but primarily by self-interest.

While the South undoubtedly viewed the whole matter as protecting their self-interest, their property, their slaves — what, exactly, would ever be the North's self-interest beyond the immense financial interests of an influential few?

Would northern white citizens ever feel sufficient compassion for the southern black slave to willingly go to war against their southern white counterparts? Even at great financial cost? Even risking their own lives, simply because they were so impassioned by the injustice?

Surely there were fervent abolitionists who would, but undoubtedly the masses looked upon the hundreds of years of southern tradition as but an unfortunate, unwise, and even immoral condition; but just what were they supposed to do about it?

It would be human nature to view such an ingrained, widespread tradition which had been around for thousands of years around the world and in the country hundreds of years as otherwise well beyond their means to change.

If some of the most influential Southerners viewed slavery in such a manner themselves — men such as Washington, Mason and Jefferson — would northern men be so principled and motivated to seek to abolish slavery no matter the cost?

Mark knew that parallels and contrasts of philosophical quandaries today would better show that slavery was unlikely the true cause of that infernal war.

For instance, how many people today would go to war to stop abortion?

Sure, there are records of a few fanatics killing abortion doctors in a self-righteous manner, in similar vein as Payton Phillips' actions to help murder slave owners. But would the average American choose to kill an abortion doctor even though those hands are badly stained in blood?

Would it not then be even more difficult to think of killing the front counter receptionist who facilitated the procedures?

What about the millions of women who had abortions or the tens of millions of Americans who merely think abortion should be allowed, for “a woman's right to choose” — is it ok to kill them, to wage war against them?

As few rational Americans think abortionists or abortion supporters should be subject to wanton murder, how exactly, then, does the portion of the population which opposes abortion go to war against the other portion of the population who supports the practice which is openly-declared legal?

That, however, is exactly what was said to have happened regarding slavery. Yet few Americans today challenge the belief that the war wasn't fought over slavery.

Meanwhile, bone-chilling comparisons between slavery and abortion nevertheless show slavery to be far *less* of an evil than abortion; more similar than different.

Mark knew President Jefferson and the Ninth Congress prohibited the foreign importation of additional slaves as soon as the temporary constitutional prohibition against regulation of that trade in Article I, Section 9, Clause 1 expired on December 31, 1807. He also knew that Congress made slave importation an act of piracy in 1820, punishable by death.

Without additional slaves being imported into America after 1807, the tripling in the number of slaves from 1810 to nearly four million in 1860 as shown by census numbers could only come from births within the U.S.

This fact provides fair evidence that slavery did not adversely affect the quantity of life — certainly the *quality* — but not overtly the *quantity*.

Not to diminish the enslavement of some six to ten or twelve million slaves who had ever lived in the United States during the 200 years under which it was allowed, however, there have been an estimated 50 million abortions carried out in the United States just since 1973.

Today's aborted children are never given the chance afforded every slave in early America — *to live life* — *even* if that life was only in slavery.

That five times as many unborn children have been intentionally terminated in one-fifth the amount of time than the number of people who ever experienced American slavery is a moral travesty far greater.

The punishment of death is reserved only for the most heinous of criminals after they have been convicted with extensive due process rights and their every right to an appeal has been exhausted; unless, of course, one is the most innocent and defenseless of all human beings, an unborn child conceived since 1973.

Every year, our brave fallen veterans are remembered on Memorial Day for their sacrifices to maintain our way of life and liberty.

Sadly, there are single years when more unborn U.S. children have been aborted than the total number of troops that have died in all American wars combined, since the American Revolution (about 1.3 million).

The manner by which society protects its most vulnerable foretells its future. Abortion, as slavery, will inevitably be but a dark footnote in American history. Americans may well again be judged, but it is not the framers of our government which bear the greatest fault.

Advocates of state-sanctioned abortion tell grim horror stories of young women of yesteryear aborting their fetuses in back rooms with coat hangers to support their contention that abortion is the lesser of two evils.

However, such practices were from a time when social mores were such that unwed mothers were socially blacklisted from their communities and the resultant shame of a growing belly without a ring on the finger affected girls and families in ways which are essentially irrelevant today.

The very loosening of society's moral compass against unwed mothers and even against teenage pregnancies has undermined one of abortion's most potent historical arguments.

Abortion is now sold on convenience and wholesale 'freedom' from all accountability than anything else. Inconvenience and

irresponsibility are hardly shining principles to rally around when principles of life and death are concerned.

Some fair-weather abortion opponents may argue that today's abortion foes have no real ability to fight against it, given the supreme Court's ruling in *Roe v. Wade* forty years ago in 1973, which supposedly upheld abortion as a "woman's right to choose."

However, the supreme Court also upheld slavery in their infamous *Dred Scot* case just *four* years before hostilities began in the Civil War. Again, the parallels between slavery and abortion show more similarity than difference, but that slavery was the lesser of two disturbing evils.

Besides, Mark knew that those who argue *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion conveniently miss the point. The Court merely stated:

"We, therefore, conclude that the right to personal privacy includes the abortion decision, but that this right is not unqualified and must be considered against important state interest in regulation."

Finding that the right of privacy extends to the 'abortion *decision*' in no way protects or legalizes the 'abortion *procedure*', a medical procedure with extensive legal and moral implications.

To think the State may actually ever regulate *any* 'decision' is rather absurd, Orwell's 'thought police' aside.

Certainly the State extensively regulates every aspect of the medical field down to absurd levels; to think the State cannot reach to regulate the surgical removal of *any* tissue is rather ridiculous, let alone the very tissue *which is the very life developing of another human being*.

It is illogical to allege that the federal and State governments can absolutely regulate the 'endangered' Mazama Pocket Gopher or the Mexican long-nosed bat and but cannot protect human life. Only in a world devoid of all reason could such a travesty be supported.

Mark knew that ‘judicial activism’ such as *Roe v. Wade* actually provides but compelling evidence of legislative sloppiness, of contradictory legislation which judges attempt to sort out. Sadly, courts do not necessarily have inspiring history for adhering to principles of justice in attempting to resolve them.

The remedy for legal inconsistencies, of course, is to resolve them legislatively, not to throw out the baby with the bathwater.

The *Roe* Court examining the Texas law under which “Roe” was being tried, after all, footnoted without comment Wisconsin’s clear law which then stated an “unborn child” was “a human being from the time of conception until it is born alive.”

Such clear definitions prove impenetrable to court activism *when properly supported* legislatively with consistent laws. The court, of course, was not looking at the consistent Wisconsin law, but the contradictory Texas law.

There have been hundreds and thousands of cases where some robber, rapist or murderer is set free by the court over some legal technicality. To argue that those courts legalized robbery, rape or murder would be entirely absurd, however.

When a doctor commits the crime of abortion on a requesting pregnant woman where such a procedure is properly and consistently made illegal, then the caught doctor and the willing pregnant participant can and will suffer the prescribed punishments when found guilty, just as any other crime properly delineated and judicially enforced.

However, when a doctor commits abortion on a requesting pregnant woman where such procedure is improperly and inconsistently made illegal, then both the doctor and the patient may go free without criminal punishment, *like any other criminal facing failed processing*. This is all that occurred in *Roe v. Wade*.

The route to correct the inconsistency is legislatively, not to discard all consistent laws in every other State and give up the battle for life.

There are many impassioned advocates today on both sides of the abortion debate; no doubt about it. Mark would argue that abortion was one of the most divisive matters yet facing America.

However, to the chagrin of fanatics on both sides of the abortion debate, Mark knew that the vast majority of Americans seemingly viewed the whole debate much as disinterested parties, as beyond their ability to change *and thus almost completely off their radar screen.*

Mark argued that would have precisely been the inevitable position regarding slavery 150 years earlier; slavery that had been the status quo in America for 200 years, not to mention being in existence as long as humans have existed in history.

If abortion wasn't the 'right' topic to cause sufficient uproar to foment internal war; what about religion, homosexuality, immigration, entitlements, or racism? Whatever could be the most decisive issue in America today, could that issue actually lead to all-out civil war costing 600,000 American lives and \$13,000,000,000 dollars — thirteen billion 1865 gold and silver dollars?

Human nature seldom changes. The likelihood that northern white citizens in 1860 cared so much about southern black slaves to go to war against their southern white counterparts and willingly risk their lives and pay huge war debts for generations borders on the incredible.

Matters outside of fundamental principles of government were brought to bear in the Civil War; self-interest.

The self-interest of the North was for the very few who stood to gain massive profits from the war, where passions on a decisive issue were inflamed and then ignited with a sufficient fuse.

Mark did not yet know what could have possibly served as that all-important fuse, but knew that is what he yet needed to learn. After all, a powder keg without a proper fuse produces no bang. And without a bang, there was no buck to be earned.

Following the money trail often explains human matters very well. Mark knew that society prospers when harmful self-interest is properly held in check, allowing beneficial self-interest to prosper. Rights denied to some will inevitably lead to rights denied to all but a precious few.

Slavery as one of the ends of war was unlikely, but certainly provided an effective means to divide a nation so it could be conquered from within, as the voiceless many were forced to pay a hefty price to an influential few.

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On Tuesday, Penny drove Mark over to their friends who had received the last package which Steve Fredrickson had sent from Washington, D.C. This was the information Steve's researcher had gathered on government oaths.

The information wasn't anywhere near as important as Chester's documents, but Mark wanted to retrieve some of the other material they sent back from Washington, D.C. before picking up the prize, to make sure nothing eventful would likely happen during the retrieval of the packages.

Getting home with the information, Mark began looking through the copies of the legislative acts and congressional records on that topic. He had been curious about oaths ever since he had casually read some time earlier that the oath changed during the Civil War.

Mark scanned through the documents and again decided they were further documents to study on a distant rainy day.

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Mark went down Thursday to the Vancouver Post Office to pick up his General Delivery parcel sent registered mail. He brought all five pieces of the cut-up registered mail receipt in case he should need it for any reason. He also brought along his cloth shoulder bag which had a large open box already in it to help hide the dimensions of the smaller box he would be picking up.

He gave the clerk the Registered Mail tracking number and his full legal name and she went to get the box out of lock-up.

The postal clerk retrieved the box and asked for his identification. Once she verified Mark's identity, she handed over the box without incident. Mark examined the box around the edges; top, bottom, front and back. No tampering. Mark placed that box within the box in his shoulder bag and went straight home.

Chapter Six

Mark knew it was important to critically examine every document in Chester's file which cost Chester his life.

But first Mark wanted to sort the papers out by topic to get an idea what he had. He placed Chester's journal in one pile. He placed Payton Phillip's confession in another. Samuel Dempsey's confession landed in a third pile.

The hotel ledger from the bankster's 1849 meeting went along with Payton's confession.

Sifting through the documents, Mark sorted the ones he could into the three divisions; a fourth pile was for all the documents he didn't know belonged where.

After sorting the documents, he continued concentrating again on Chester's journal so he'd have a better idea of how all the documents fit into the unknown puzzle.

Mark found Chester's notation of April 7, 1871, amusing. On that day Chester relayed that he had purchased a \$100 share of stock from one of the national banks so he could attend their shareholder meetings.

Chester Adamson must have been somewhat fearless to go into the lion's den just so he could stir the pot from the inside.

Writing of the April 19th shareholder meeting, Chester noted that he asked to see the banking association's certificate of formation and the articles of association. He asked to see the shareholder names, places of residence as well as the number of shares owned by each. He asked for the amount of capital stock subscribed and paid and the amount of bank notes issued by the association and the amount of government bonds backing them.

Looking through the unknown stack of documents, Mark found the papers relating to this activity, including the original bank stock certificate, and placed them in a new pile.

From the get-go, Chester let it be known that he was going to be a pain in the derriere. The actions suggested that perhaps he had greater interest than a typical shareholder, not content to sit back and collect dividends, watching his share value grow.

Weekly trips down to the bank's main branch were made to request additional information.

By the second shareholder meeting, a special meeting called in June, he was already becoming well known as a trouble-maker.

Writing in July, Chester noted that he hadn't really found any paperwork in disarray, although he was quite surprised how little gold, silver or even paper currencies were actually ever paid for any bank stock.

Only the first of multiple subscription payments were typically paid in liquid funds; the bank being allowed to operate once only 30% of its original stock subscription had been met. Subsequent installment payments for paying in the remainder of the capital amount originally subscribed typically came out of ensuing banking profits.

In his notation dated August 4, 1871, Chester stated that he had hit pay dirt with his investigation into the national banks. He relayed that this information was the most-important information which he had ever come across, even more important than Payton Phillips' death-bed confession.

As his travails against the national banks became increasingly well-known in the community, Chester wrote that he had been approached by a man on August 2nd who stated that his son had been murdered 10 years earlier.

The father provided Chester with his son Gordon Radcliff's sworn affidavit which had been written just before he had been killed. The father said Gordon admitted to him that Charles Cunningham III wanted him dead, to steal Gordon's strategies for himself. The son came to tell his father goodbye, telling him that he was going into hiding and leaving the State. He never made it that far.

The father relayed that the envelope containing the affidavit was yet sealed, as his son made him promise never to open it. The son clarified that if he should ever die under mysterious circumstances, to give the envelope to someone brave enough to fight the world all by himself.

The son's stated reason preventing his father from knowing the contents of the letter was to avoid making him a target. The father could tell, however, the real reason; his son could not bear the thought of his father knowing what he had done, the actions which were thoroughly detailed in the letter within the sealed envelope.

The father was in tears as he relayed the story, saying that he had been asking for God's forgiveness for his son's transgressions, whatever they were. He suspected they had something to do with the War of Rebellion.

The father said he had been waiting since his son's funeral to know to whom to give the envelope. When he had heard several bankers speaking quite unfavorably about Chester's trouble-making with the banks, he figured he must have found the man for the job.

The father knew that his own time left on earth was coming to a close and that even if Chester wasn't the right man for the job, that Chester was likely good enough to at least take over the search for the right man.

Searching through the paperwork for a sworn affidavit signed by Gordon Radcliff, Mark found the eight-page document dated March 25, 1861.

As Mark began reading through it, it didn't take him long to realize that he had just found the fuse which would soon ignite the powder keg which would explode into the War Between the States.

Mark now better understood the South's referring to the war as 'The War of Northern Aggression'. If the South had known the true story, however, they would have called it 'The War of Northern Deception'.

The master-plan Gordon Radcliff envisioned would not only provide the fuse for igniting the battle, but more importantly also the creative means for transforming the federal government far beyond the spirit of the Constitution.

Gordon wrote that he thought that it would be best to move government beyond generational wars, but that the bankers should never concede the vast government budgets then only politically possible through war.

After all, he noted that high government expenditures were fundamental to the banker's welfare. Thus any favorable plan to replace intermittent wars should nevertheless allow on-going and massive expenditures.

Immense internal public improvements, such as building post roads and defense fortifications, however, had proven far too fickle for a public who complained of too little benefit for the vast government buck spent.

The ticket for increasing government expenditures, Gordon argued, was that the public simply needed a more personal stake in the matter. In that manner, the public who directly benefitted from those budgets would begin clamoring for increased government expenditures, doing the bankers' most difficult work for them.

The bankers, after all, didn't really care about the items or services the government bought. The items could be guns or butter.

What only mattered to the bankers was that money be spent in greater ability than the government could tax.

Unfortunately for the bankers, Gordon admitted, strict construction of the Constitution prohibited government expenditures for the individual welfare. He said that the Constitution only allowed expenditures for those things which were inseparable one person from another, for the *general* welfare and the *common* defense.

After all, Gordon noted if the Constitution allowed for the specific welfare, the U.S. government could easily avoid internal war simply by purchasing all the slaves from their owners.

Indeed, individual slave owners otherwise inclined to free their own slaves such as Jefferson were disinclined from doing so since it not only meant a loss in wealth in the value of each freed slave, but primarily because their business would then face *perpetual non-competiveness* as their competitors continued raising their own crops with slave labor.

With universal, compensated emancipation, however, no individual slave-owner would alone stand exposed to economic ruin as his neighbors indefinitely undercut his production costs with their slave labor. Since all the slaves would be purchased under this plan, no slave owner would even face any loss of wealth.

It was then that Mark realized that taking the Civil War to ultimately free the slaves provided compelling evidence that strict construction of the U.S. Constitution was still the practiced rule as late as 1861.

If the Constitution could have been loosely 'interpreted' then as was today common, politicians desiring to avoid war could have easily stretched government to allow payment for slaves at a small fraction of the total cost of war and completely avoided the tragic loss of life.

Where the U.S. government was empowered to act *in all cases whatsoever*, however, slaves were freed exactly in such a manner by Congress on April 16, 1862. Slave owners in the District of Columbia were allowed to petition the government for compensation as their slaves were emancipated by operation of law. Three commissioners were set up as a board to determine the validity of the petitions and value of the slave-owners' claims.

But the federal government as a whole was yet confined to strict construction of the Constitution. "No," wrote Gordon. "If people want limited government, then we shall have war. Then we shall work to end limited government once and for all so we may thereafter do as we please and move beyond war to perpetual enormous government debts, spending as we desire."

Gordon argued that they must move beyond strict construction of the Constitution, just as Charles Cunningham III had been planning for over a decade, but had thus far been wholly unsuccessful. Gordon said it was for the country's own good.

Until recently, Gordon argued that the supreme Court's infamous 1857 *Dred Scot* decision upholding slavery had been the banker's biggest disappointment.

Because of that court's ruling, the North could no longer easily justify a war with the South over a condition again declared legal by the highest court in the land.

An even bigger setback for the bankers, however, occurred on March 2, 1861.

It was on this date that Congress approved a joint resolution proposing a new Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Peaceful resolution to the slavery question appeared all but imminent.

After all, the proposed Corwin Amendment which was never ratified stated:

“No amendment shall be made to the Constitution which will authorize or give to Congress the power to abolish or interfere, within any State, with the domestic institutions thereof, including that of persons held to labor or service by the laws of said State.”

Even more ominous regarding this proposed Amendment was to realize that it was proposed *after* seven southern States had *already* seceded from the Union, *after* they had *already* withdrawn their Senators and Representatives from Congress.

This resolution passed by the necessary *two-thirds* vote of *both* houses of Congress even *without* the votes of those seven southern States *which had already seceded*.

This proposed Amendment was a *Northern* proposal to woo the Southern States back into the Union.

Surely the Amendment could be ratified by the requisite three-fourths of the States if those seceded States returned to the Union.

As late as March 2, 1861, it appeared that with the smallest bit of time and just a modicum of diplomacy, ruffled feathers could soon be calmed and the divided Union reunited, with slavery intact in the South but likely prevented from spreading to other States.

The banksters knew they had to do something, and fast.

But each week seemed to bring even more tragic news for the banksters who so desired war.

On March 9, 1861, the Confederate States of America ominously approved their first emission of government-issued Confederate Currency, directly, *without going through banks*.

Of course, the United States operating under strict construction of the whole Constitution had no power to emit their own bills of credit while the Constitution expressly prohibited the States from exercising this exact power.

Removing themselves from under the Constitution, however, the Confederate States resorted to the ancient practice of governments emitting their own currency, displacing private banks entirely.

The banksters' worst fear was that the South's plan of succession would succeed.

Should peaceful resolution result in a divided nation, then all the banksters' work over the past decade would have likely only cut their future banking profits in half, as Northern banks wouldn't necessarily find ready acceptance or profits in a seceded South where the government printed its own currency.

But a peaceful reunion of the seceded States wasn't all that much more enticing for the banksters. Sadly for them, President Lincoln was a strong advocate of the proposed Corwin Amendment.

In the time leading to and including his earlier presidency, Abraham Lincoln worked politically to limit the expansion of slavery into the territories rather than abolish it in the States where it had been long-practiced.

Pragmatic Northern political thought as late as March of 1861 was to mollify the Southern States which had seceded from the Union to rejoin it, while seeking to prevent further division of the remaining influential States yet likely to secede, especially Virginia and North Carolina.

Gordon Radcliff wrote in his confession that in the middle of March of 1861, he feared peaceful secession would succeed, since neither side was willing to fire that fateful first shot.

Each political loss made a radical new master-plan all that much more important. That is why Gordon was so confident he would win the easy support of Charles Cunningham III once Charles was told of his brilliant plan.

After all, Gordon's plan would not only get them into immediate war, but importantly it would then allow the federal government to

move beyond the clear words of the Constitution, to do most anything it pleased, for evermore.

It was this latter principle which allowed Gordon to sleep at night, knowing that he'd actually be *saving lives*. Future Americans could be spared from generational wars needed to assure monumental banking profits, even as his plan necessitated a current war to transform the government with an explosive kick-start.

Gordon Radcliff's plan was ironically rooted in America's extensive seacoast defense system.

On March 17, 1861, two weeks after the necessary two-thirds of Congress had sent the proposed 13th Amendment to the States for ratification and a week after the Confederate States of America approved emitting bills of credit directly, Gordon Radcliff attended a family reunion and dinner.

Originally Gordon had planned to skip the reunion, so he could continue to concentrate on his work, to come up with some plan to move things forward.

It was only after the ever-persistent nagging by his mother that he dutifully decided at the last minute to attend the function.

If his mother only knew the ultimate cost of that nagging, she would have never enticed her son to attend.

If she knew then the devastation her son would help instigate and his 'reward' for bringing it to his mentor's attention, she would have taken far more drastic action than simply avoid nagging her son.

After dinner, Gordon patiently listened, along with several other family members, to his patriotic cousin ramble on continuously about his second year of engineering studies at West Point.

The cousin spoke at great length, saying that he had never really liked blowing things up as a kid, but had always loved building structures.

Gordon began strategizing, planning his exit. The only thing he liked more than blowing things up was making money, and he had much figuring yet to do to better ensure he could make that happen.

The cousin admitted when his brothers were playing ‘Cowboys and Indians’ when they were all young, he would be constructing safe-haven forts to help protect the women and children.

Continuing those efforts into adulthood, the cousin figured that with the men out fighting battles, many women may soon find themselves widowed. He planned to marry one of those rich widows, like his hero, George Washington.

As the cousin with no shortage of patriotic fervor began relaying the history of the First System of seacoast defense implemented in 1794, Gordon got up from his chair to make his exit.

Gordon was almost out of earshot when his cousin told the others that the 1794 defense act explicitly made it lawful for the President to receive cessions of State lands for building federal forts.

Gordon did not immediately understand why this new information sparked his interest, but he instinctively knew the information was important to his own plans. Gordon thus sat back down and soon began extensively questioning his enthusiastic West Point cousin.

Sadly, this cousin whose personal hero was General George Washington didn’t pay enough attention to that man’s Farewell Address as President.

The engineering student had no idea his cousin Gordon would soon be in primary contention for ‘The People’s Exhibit Number One’, for President Washington’s Farewell admonition to be on “guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism.”

It was that day that Gordon Radcliff realized the United States’ defensive forts were primarily aimed outward to fend off foreign attack. They were thus more vulnerable to a sustained attack from

within. But far more importantly, the forts themselves offered the northern banksters a spectacular opportunity just by being federal forts.

Fully intrigued with the topic, Gordon pressed his cousin further.

The West Point cadet was quite happy to convey his thorough knowledge of civil defense to his interested relative who had never before paid him much attention.

The cadet detailed that when Congress and President Washington approved the First System of defense for the eastern seaboard on March 20, 1794, when war with Great Britain again appeared increasingly imminent, that they approved 20 fortification sites from Maine to Georgia. A 21st site was added two months later.

Two months later, Congress also approved the creation of a Corps of Artillerists and Engineers, which was separated in 1802 when a permanent Army Corps of Engineers was born and stationed at West Point. The military academy was then officially constituted to train future generations of American military engineers.

In 1807, Congress and President Jefferson commenced the Second System of additional fortification work.

After the capitol burned during the War of 1812 due to an overwhelmed defense, a more extensive Third System of fortification work was approved on April 29, 1816 as a monumental \$838,000 was appropriated to begin the important work.

Whereas the cousin's life-long hero had been George Washington, Gordon's own hero was first Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton.

Gordon's favorite work was Hamilton's 1791 opinion on the constitutionality of the Bank of the United States.

At his family reunion, Gordon Radcliff's extensive studying of America's banking feud between hard money proponents and banking advocates suddenly promised to pay off in spades.

Gordon Radcliff was able to couple his West Point cousin's knowledge of engineering with Hamilton's monetary theories and come up with a fool-proof plan to make money, a whole lot of money. He and his colleagues would be able to create unfathomable wealth for themselves and set up their heirs with a virtual dynasty.

Before Hamilton provided his opinion on the first bank's constitutionality to President Washington, Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson and Attorney General Edmund Randolph had both already formally given theirs.

These latter two learned men denied the constitutionality of the U.S. government to create a corporation. Jefferson explicitly argued the power remained "exclusively with the States."

Hamilton took up the challenge. He correctly pointed out that Jefferson and Randolph were clearly wrong. Like so many constitutionalists for two hundred years to follow, Jefferson and Randolph tragically spoke and wrote in rigid absolutes regarding the impenetrable rules firmly enshrined by the Constitution.

Hamilton instead cunningly concentrated on the allowed but disregarded exception.

To charge something unconstitutional, Hamilton knew the claimant must show that the government cannot, under any circumstance, perform the action in question.

If those defending such a power can point to even a single instance, then the claim of unconstitutionality must fail. In strictest terms, of course, that power is only allowed in that one instance and still denied in all other 999 cases, but the power in question still could not be ruled unconstitutional (in *every* case) *and thus stricken from the books*.

Hamilton's 1791 bank opinion centered on one of those one-in-a-thousand instances. Hamilton therein ominously wrote:

“Surely it can never be believed that Congress with exclusive powers of legislation in all cases whatsoever, cannot erect a corporation within the district which shall become the seat of government...And yet there is an unqualified denial of the power to erect corporations in every case on the part both of the Secretary of State and of the Attorney General.”

Hamilton further detailed:

“For instance Congress have express power, ‘to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever over such district (not exceeding ten miles square) as may by cession of particular States and the acceptance of Congress, become the seat of the government of the United States; and to exercise like authority over all places purchased, by consent of the legislature of the State in which the same shall be for the erection of forts, arsenals, dockyards, and other needful buildings’.”

Of course, Hamilton was here mostly quoting Article I, Section 8, Clause 17 of the U.S. Constitution, though he omitted the word ‘magazines’ from the proper list of State cession lands.

It was Hamilton's earlier mention of land ceded by States ‘for the erection of forts’ which caught Gordon's attention once his cousin repeated it, which allowed Gordon to create his master plan.

If Gordon had not thoroughly studied Hamilton's writings, his cousin's mention of forts would not have made their impact and allowed Gordon to develop his devious plan.

What Gordon now recalled most clearly in his mind had been Hamilton's admission:

“Here then is express power to exercise exclusive legislation in all cases whatsoever over certain places, that is, to do in respect to those places all that any government whatsoever may do; For language does not afford a more complete designation of sovereign power than in those comprehensive terms. It is in other words a power to pass all laws whatsoever, and consequently to pass laws for erecting corporations as well as for any other purpose which is the proper object of law in a free government.”

It simply took his cousin’s words for the impact of Hamilton’s most enlightening paragraph ever admitted to properly register in Gordon’s mind.

He had really no idea why or how it became one of those ‘aha’ moments, with a light-bulb suddenly clicking on. But once it did, he could no longer think of anything else but its vast implications.

Forever now pressed into Gordon’s mind were Hamilton’s fateful words that “language does not afford a more complete designation of sovereign power” than the power “to do...all that *any government whatsoever* may do” in the government seat whereby Congress could “exercise exclusive legislation *in all cases whatsoever*.”

Words pretty darn near complete government omnipotence, Gordon figured, “to do...all that *any government whatsoever* may do,” at least to do all that which free government may do.

Just what Gordon had been looking for, in other words — power — raw power, to shape things completely as they pleased.

His cousin’s talk brought forth a further recollection of Hamilton’s words, when he was speaking of Jefferson:

“His first objection is, that the power of incorporation is not expressly given to Congress...But this cannot mean, that there are not certain express powers which necessary include it.

“As far, then, as there is an express power to do any particular act of legislation, there is an express one to erect a corporation in the case above described.”

In one fell swoop, Hamilton demolished Jefferson’s and Randolph’s arguments. He just showed that Congress did indeed have the express power to erect a corporation, *at the seat of government*.

Therefore both Jefferson and Randolph were clearly wrong saying members of Congress have no power *whatsoever* to erect corporations.

Alexander Hamilton had long before became Gordon’s hero after Gordon realized that Hamilton planned for the long term but nevertheless acted in the short term.

Hamilton had no compunction against even contradicting his earlier statements made in political expediency. Hamilton simply said or wrote what was needed to get the job currently at hand accomplished.

For example, Hamilton helped write *The Federalist* to get the Constitution ratified. In the 84th issue he wrote of a federal government of only delegated powers. Hamilton was then defending the original lack of a Bill of Rights within the Constitution, saying:

“Here, in strictness, the people surrender nothing, and as they retain every thing, they have no need of particular reservations...”

“I go further, and affirm that bills of rights, in the sense and in the extent in which they are contended for, are not only unnecessary in the proposed constitution, but would even be dangerous. They would contain various exceptions to powers which are not granted; and on this very account, would afford a colourable pretext to claim more than were granted. For why declare that things shall not be done which there is no power to do? Why for

instance, should it be said, that the liberty of the press shall not be restrained, when no power is given by which restrictions may be imposed? I will not contend that such a provision would confer a regulating power; but it is evident that it would furnish, to men disposed to usurp, a plausible pretence for claiming that power. They might urge with a semblance of reason, that the constitution ought not to be charged with the absurdity of providing against the abuse of an authority, which was not given, and that the provision against restraining the liberty of the press afforded a clear implication, that a power to prescribe proper regulations concerning it, was intended to be vested in the national government. This may serve as a specimen of the numerous handles which would be given to the doctrine of constructive powers, by the indulgence of an injudicious zeal for bills of rights.”

Once the Constitution had been ratified, however, Hamilton was free to write how he really felt.

In his 1791 opinion on the national bank, Hamilton writes of a contrary government of *inherent* powers which may essentially *do anything other than that expressly prohibited*, writing:

“Now it appears to the Secretary of the Treasury that this general principle is inherent in the very definition of government, and essential to every step of progress to be made by that of the United States, namely: That every power vested in a government is in its nature sovereign, and includes, by force of the term, a right to employ all the means requisite and fairly applicable to the attainment of the ends of such power, and which are not precluded by restrictions and exceptions specified in the Constitution, or not immoral, or not contrary to the essential ends of political society.

“This principle, in its application to government in general, would be admitted as an axiom; and it will be incumbent upon those who may incline to deny it, to prove

a distinction, and to show that a rule which, in the general system of things, is essential to the preservation of the social order, is inapplicable to the United States.”

In Hamilton’s second paragraph, he argues that those who allege the government’s inability to act in a certain case must prove the inapplicability of that power; essentially that the United States have power to act *except where it can be proven they don’t*, to prove a negative.

Yes, Gordon Radcliff had long marveled at Alexander Hamilton’s cunning political acumen. The man proved he could argue from two fundamentally opposing viewpoints even on the same topic only three years apart, depending on what was needed when, feeling no compunction beyond the expediency of the moment.

Gordon’s saddest personal loss happened long before he had been born, when Vice-President of the United States Aaron Burr killed Hamilton in a duel in 1804.

Chester commented in his journal that if that momentous duel had occurred 14 years earlier, that American history would have undoubtedly been far different and the federal banksters would have never been allowed in.

Chester’s comment about a single gunshot changing history if it had occurred at a different date brought back to Mark’s mind Annie Oakley’s famous letter to German Kaiser Wilhelm II after the start of World War I, requesting again the opportunity of shooting the ashes off his lit cigarette as he again held it. Mark laughed with a chuckle at the crack-shot’s wit.

It was Hamilton’s paper which convinced President Washington that the first Bank of the United States could be constitutionally created, for the government had the power to erect a corporation within the district constituting the seat of government.

Gordon Radcliff wrote in his affidavit that he had approached his mentor Charles Cunningham III with his plan to “change the United States from a ‘*them*’ to an ‘*it*,’” from a plural concept, to singular.

In his letter, Gordon wrote that his mentor Charles had long favored him and placed him under his protective wing. Evidently the older man saw some of his own ingenuity and drive in the young man.

What Gordon didn’t realize until too late was that while Charles was willing to bring Gordon in under his wing, he was wholly unwilling to let Gordon come out from under that wing to fly on his own if he would end up soaring higher than his master.

Writing in his affidavit detailing his private meeting with Charles at his home, Gordon stated that it was absolutely necessary for the first shot to be viewed by the side brave enough to fire it to believe they were really firing a defensive shot.

Gordon told Charles that in 1794 with the First System of fortification improvements, Congress expressly made it lawful for the President to accept State cessions of land to be made into federal forts. This was in accordance with express constitutional authority of Article I, Section 8, Clause 17.

Before the government would improve the land and build the fort, the States had to willingly consent and voluntarily cede their governing authority over these small, localized areas of land to the U.S. government. At best, the States sometimes retained the power to serve court processes.

The lands for forts were then withdrawn from State authority, ownership and control. The U.S. government now owned the land and also governed it exclusively.

These exclusive legislation lands were the only areas throughout the United States where one government held all government power; everywhere else our dual-form, federal-State arrangement existed

where the federal government was limited by the remainder of the Constitution.

Gordon argued that not one person in ten thousand would understand the principle that these federal forts were under exclusive federal control, fully separate from State authority.

Due to such unique circumstances, federal forts thus offered them a spectacular opportunity.

He argued that the southern States which seceded from the Union would undoubtedly — but incorrectly — think that they could ‘*take back their forts*’ which otherwise lay within the State.

Legally, however, the southern States could only then withdraw from the Union that which yet remained within State control *at that point*.

Legally, the States willingly gave up any and all ownership, control and governing power over these parcels of ground for federal forts to the United States of America decades earlier.

These lands were now federal enclaves surrounded by State governments, *even in those States which unilaterally severed their former ties with their former Union government*.

The actual process to retrocede federal lands back to States involved formal cessions of federal authority akin to when the United States gave up their claim to the unused portions of the District of Columbia back to Virginia in 1846, keeping Maryland’s earlier cessions.

Alternatively, between foreign governments — including those suddenly foreign to one another — formal treaties of cession would be necessary, such as the 1783 Treaty of Paris concluding the Revolutionary War where Great Britain ceded to the United States all her former claims of government and soil.

The crux of the matter, argued Gordon, if the South were to raid one of these Union forts otherwise in the South, the South would incorrectly see *it as seizing what was rightfully theirs*.

The North, however, would know that these lands were rightfully exclusive property belonging to the United States which they owned and governed, without State intervention.

Thus the North would properly see the raid on a federal fort, even though the fort may be geographically lying in the general vicinity of one of the Southern succeeded States, as an aggression directly on the United States' interests.

Immediately recognizing that the strategy was not only valid, but brilliant, Charles knew in his gut in a moment that this is what his plan had been long missing, a sufficient fuse; a reason how both sides could seemingly act *defensively*, especially by that party firing that fateful first shot.

Writing in his journal, Chester Adamson said that the battle initiated by the South for the Union fort — Fort Sumter — in South Carolina on April 12, 1861, was the culmination of Gordon Radcliff's plan implemented by Charles Cunningham III after Charles killed the mastermind.

Mark looked up from his chair at his desk. He again felt sickened to his stomach. He looked down at his hands. They were shaking. He had stared into the eyes of the devil incarnate and he had seen complete evil.

Though Mark's mind was growing dizzy, he knew he had to finish reading the Chester's notations and Gordon's affidavit.

Gordon clarified that this little-understood clause wasn't only the ticket to *start* the war, however, but the ticket to move forward during and after the war to move past strict construction of the U.S. Constitution once and for all, way past.

Listening to him in rapt attention, a bomb could have exploded nearby and not broken Charles' concentration as he remained affixed to his star pupil's inspired words, Gordon admitted in his affidavit.

On that day Gordon Radcliff told Charles Cunningham III that all they had to do was get Congress to enact laws for 'the United States' and then define that term in the small print only as the district constituting the seat of government.

Congressmen would surely go along with the plan, for they would then have the power to do as they please, enriching themselves and all their friends in the process. Government would soon become *of* the elite, *by* the powerful, *for* the rich.

This process, Gordon stated, would turn the United States from a 'them' into an 'it', from a plural term for the collection of States to that of a singular entity for the government seat.

The collection of States united under common government under the Constitution would become transformed into an omnipotent government entity that may "do...all that *any government whatsoever* may do" in "*all cases whatsoever*."

Gordon relayed to Charles the immortal words of Alexander Hamilton — "language does not afford a more complete designation of sovereign power" than the exclusive legislation power of Congress.

The Constitution for the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave nevertheless allowed for a little federal tyranny in the government seat. Gordon's plan was simply to open the gate of that 10-miles square corral to free the chained beast so it would do *as* they wanted, *where* they wanted, *when* they wanted.

It was only necessary to hide the true source of their power as they intentionally sought to confuse matters, making it look like words no longer had any meaning and that government could now arbitrarily decide upon all matters within its own unlimited discretion.

Legally, laws enacted in such fashion would only be enacted in the district constituting the seat of government of the United States, so they would not be limited to strict construction of the Constitution applicable to Congress when law was enacted for all the States united.

Did the banksters want to enact a law authorizing legal tender paper currencies? Done. Congress was not expressly prohibited this power and thus they could enact such laws here.

Only States were expressly prohibited from emitting bills of credit. Congress here enacted laws typical of States, but members of Congress were not limited by the constitutional prohibitions applicable to States since this area was formed from States, but was no longer a State.

Did the banksters want Congress to accept all the national banks' paper currencies as receivables for payments due the government? Done.

Did the banksters want government to grow to consume more public funds? Done.

No less of an authority than Alexander Hamilton created the plan, Gordon argued, even if it would not be implemented until generations later when men no longer understood the Constitution as well as the founders who would have never been fooled by so easy a deception.

The original seed of raw power planted in the Constitution was now ripe for harvest, Gordon argued. All they needed to do was plant that seed in the lush soil outside the corral and provide it with sufficient graft to grow at their beckoning, shelling out rewards and power to all those who went along with it, paid for by all the pitiful saps who failed to grasp what was occurring.

Though Gordon Radcliff came up with that plan, it turned out he wasn't the most evil. He yet had enough innocence left in him to believe that a fellow conspirator was not his enemy.

Charles Cunningham III, however, was not quite so encumbered by such false thoughts of camaraderie. He was absolutely driven to maximum political and economic success no matter the cost.

Although Charles often worked with men of influence when they were willing and able to help, Gordon's lack of wealth or accumulation of power offered Charles no further benefit once Gordon readily gave up his invaluable plan to his greedy mentor.

Gordon Radcliff was expendable and simply now fit within the category of collateral damage control, for Charles Cunningham III was vainly unwilling to hear his fellow conspirators praise his pupil as being greater than the master.

When he did not get the reaction out of Charles that he knew he earned, Gordon became frightened. He mistakenly thought the Charles would be thrilled for the both of them as they would continue to plot together to bring America to her knees at their thrown of absolute power.

Instead Gordon witnessed firsthand the calculating look in Charles' eyes which sought maximum benefit only for himself, as Charles contemplated a bright future, alone.

Wanting to get away from Charles after recognizing the danger signs but knowing he'd lose his chance if he panicked, Gordon played it cool and acted as if nothing was wrong.

Whiles Charles was still working through his calculations to know if Gordon was yet needed, Gordon nonchalantly asked if he would like some refreshment. Once Charles answered in the affirmative, Gordon seized his opportunity to flee after he had left Charles' study. Charles was too deep in thought to realize that Gordon was gone until he had disappeared.

If he had continued fleeing, Gordon would have undoubtedly made it to safety. It was his urge to confess his sins and give his father that admission for safekeeping which brought him within Charles' henchmen's sights as he travelled through town one last time.

The most ruthless of Charles' henchmen soon cut Gordon Radcliff's throat down to the vertebral body, severing his left Jugular vein and Carotid artery. The henchman was perfecting his technique, such as when the time came to cut Chester Adamson's throat, he was becoming a well-polished professional.

Chapter Seven

After looking through Chester Adamson's disturbing research and commentary, but finding nothing else of great import, Mark knew that he must get the information to Peter Dennison.

Someone else needed to know the discovery, should anything ever happen to Mark.

Since his kidnapping, Mark had no more illusions of retaining sufficient control over his life that he could rest assured that he would be able to carry out his plans; he certainly didn't want the information lost for another 140 years.

Peter had the most-extensive network of people working over the longest period of time towards restoration of the American Dream of anyone Mark personally knew.

Steve Fredrickson and especially Janet Davidson were the next logical choices for receiving the information, of course.

Unfortunately, Janet and Steve had been working at a sprint-level pace rather than Peter's endurance run. Mark thought it best to give Janet and Steve a temporary reprieve from knowing the information so they could start a transition to a longer-viewed, slower pace to avoid burn-out.

Besides, Mark was still feeling a little guilty about letting them stand exposed to repercussions for publicizing his work all alone. He felt inclined to protect them until he completed his research and had it written out so many others could then be quickly brought up to speed.

Mark's next therapy appointment with Abigail Galloway was a week-and-a-half away. Abbey could get word to Peter that they needed to meet. Until then, Mark would continue his work to process the information.

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Penny and Mark left Vancouver early Saturday morning to visit Bethany and the kids in Richland, where they had moved after Bethany married Brad Summers over the past summer.

Brad was a bachelor from Ephrata who worked for the Grant County PUD at the Wanapum Dam on the mighty Columbia River, downriver from the town of Vantage and the I-90 freeway.

Riding in a vehicle between Vancouver and the Tri-Cities or back, it would be difficult to ignore the vast power generation projects located along that route which provide the Pacific Northwest with plentiful electricity at enviable power rates.

Following the Columbia River, Penny and Mark drove past the four lower federal dams whose combined power generation capacity exceeds 6,000 megawatts, while providing flood control, irrigation, and ample recreation opportunities.

Further upriver were the five local public utility district dams of Chelan, Douglas, and Grant counties.

Two more federal dams lay upriver within Washington State, including the massive Grand Coulee Dam which alone generates 6,809 megawatts.

Of course, scores of environmentalists detest these magnificent dams, precisely for their abundance of low cost, renewable, and clean energy which helps power a working America.

As Mark thought about environmentalist's dislike of dams due to alleged harm to fish and habitat, he understandably began thinking of food. "How about having grilled salmon tonight for dinner?" he asked Penny.

"It's fine with me," answered Penny, "but I need to see if Bethany has anything else planned already."

There was something satisfying about eating salmon after a day driving past the inspired dams, if for no other reason to register a strong vote of support for the dams.

Mark realized that many of his environmental opposites who opposed dams likely supported 'a woman's right to choose' to end the life of her unborn child.

There was something doubly wrong with supporting the termination of human life while simultaneously crusading for some fish, animal, or plant.

From such inconsistencies, Mark could not help but begin to draw parallels between environmentalism today and slavery abolition yesterday; that like slavery before it, today's rabid environmentalism was but the acknowledged means to hidden ends.

Like yesterday's abolitionists, Mark knew that environmentalism today was supported by untold numbers of well-intentioned individuals based upon a few valid concerns, even if those concerns were blown out of proportion, ignored mitigating factors and disregarded man's ability to devise technological solutions to eliminate most any problems which developed.

The primary role of these supporters was to allow their fervor to set the movement's self-righteous tone.

Left to their own devices, however, extreme environmentalists wouldn't be able to effectively promote their pet causes. Like the slavery abolitionists of yesteryear, today's environmentalists needed significant financial backing and political clout that they would be unable to provide themselves.

Like yesterday's financial community, today's financial community doesn't do anything but for their own self-interest, which is not harmful as long as it is properly held in check.

Unfortunately, instead they tout corporate responsibility while they position themselves for the silent kill in a high-stakes game of chess, always three steps ahead of their opponents.

Corporate America thrusts environmentalism into the limelight with high-dollar propaganda campaigns to accomplish politically their own selfish but dishonest ends which they would be unable to obtain upon a direct market approach.

With corporate backing, soon beneficial federal legislation is enacted which provides environmental groups legal standing to sue in court any project they allege harms the environment.

With a guaranteed seat now at the bargaining table, proponents for any project then must satisfy extortionate demands from environmentalists or face long legal battles in court which threaten to bankrupt any project before it could ever get off the ground.

Thus, environmental powerhouses serve as the enforcement arm of financial powerhouses. Costs soon skyrocket on disfavored efficient methods of energy production, making the favored inefficient means of production seem more appealing.

Politically-oriented businesses seek to internalize profits while pushing the risk for loss upon an unassuming public, seeking out monopoly situations where government efficiently eliminates their competition for them.

Mark knew that nothing threatens politically-oriented businessmen more than technological revolution which threatens to make existing products or services obsolete.

The last thing any well-connected business which may have spent thousands of man-hours and millions of dollars establishing production facilities wants to see is game-changing technologies which destroy the market for their product.

Politically-oriented companies typically find research and development not only too costly and risky, but that it produces far

less bang for the buck as compared with simply spending a few dollars politically to hold back one's nimble competition through business regulation.

In field after field, investigation of regulatory shackles invariably shows that they were instigated by request of the industry itself, not on outside appeal.

Of course the industry voices requesting regulation could never admit they wanted the regulation to protect themselves from upstart competitors with radical new ideas. No, such requests are always couched as "protecting the public."

"Just look at the unproven process and imagine all that could go wrong," regulators are told by industry insiders. "There must be a new law to prevent the new process until it is proven."

Of course, the regulators are more than happy to enact more regulations which empower them even further to do as they please.

The status quo is revered while change is feared, simply because profits are easier in stable markets, at least except when chaos is planned to shake loose all the spare change.

Environmentalism is favored by big business and big government to better control the market, to restrain radical new ways of doing things until the favored few regain control.

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As Penny drove past Biggs Junction, Mark looked north across the river towards Goldendale. Dotted along the hills between there and Three-Mile Canyon 45 miles further east were hundreds of politically-correct power generation machines of the day, the tall bird-choppers seemingly out of the H.G. Wells' 1898 *War of the Worlds*.

Mark had no preconditioned aversion to windmills. Properly suited to the work needing to be performed and without subsidy, they are capable of performing their function well.

Evanston Farms pictures taken in 1950, after all, showed the farm's decades-old windmill which lifted water from the well into an elevated open water tank.

No, what Mark disliked about modern windmills was the environmental hoopla which sought at great expense to de-industrialize America and force intermittent power generation mechanisms on corporate America which already had a difficult enough time competing worldwide.

As Mark and Penny drove past the windmills, their blades were stationary due to the lack of wind. Nevertheless, the private investors owning the windmills were well-compensated annually by federal subsidy.

Unless corporate and residential America were willing to do without power anytime there was no wind, however, redundant sources of power were needed, defeating the very purpose of an intermittent source, other than serving as a reason for subsidy.

Suited to their purpose without subsidy, solar panels, like windmills, could also serve a purpose.

For example, solar energy is great if one wanted to live well off the grid in a remote cabin, as long as one had wood heat and propane for cooking and refrigeration, for instance.

As efficiencies improve, solar power is capable of serving in additional capacities, especially in small settings to supplement peak power usage.

Widespread commercial use of solar panels fail economically not only from intermittent power production, but primarily because no concentration of the power source is possible other than what each individual collector can directly capture at any given moment in time.

Conversely, hydroelectric dams make great practical sense because they first allow their power source to concentrate its energy over a large area and over time. All the rain and surface groundwater over vast drainage basins is first collected, accumulated and then channeled as a flowing river *before* it is finally harnessed for power production.

Trying to collect the sun's rays directly in solar panels as the sun shines would be akin to trying to erect mini-hydroelectric dams to generate power from drops of rain as they fell from the sky.

Of course, the earth's short-term solar collection mechanism — renewable trees — is no longer a politically-correct source for fuel generation, precisely because biomass is a viable power generation option.

Trees, which convert CO₂, sunlight, and water in their photosynthetic process to generate carbohydrate to make trees grow and give off life-sustaining oxygen in the process, efficiently store up that carbohydrate as the sun shines over many decades, concentrating the biomass.

From that biomass may be produced copious amounts of electrical energy through wood-fired boilers at a steam plant, for instance.

The earth's long-term store solar collection mechanisms — coal and oil — have long been vilified for making their dense store of past solar energy available for human use.

While sunlight is not presently a commercially-viable source for large-scale 24/7 power generation needs, after the sun has been collected, stored, and transmitted through trees, coal or oil, sunlight is commercially-viable through 24/7 power generation through combustion of those sources.

Not until intermittent wind sources are likewise coupled with some type of storage capacity system, perhaps elevating water to later

run through turbine generators during peak output needs, would wind become a viable source of energy. That wide scale adoption of such a plan is cost-prohibitive shows the current futility of this energy source other than as a means of subsidy.

A few solar panels atop a corporate headquarters of a company which consumes massive amounts of energy only serve a political statement.

Undoubtedly, those panels could not even be directly wired to that headquarters' coffee pots; not even a caffeine addict at a 'green' company would likely stand for coffee only in daylight.

Just as abolition of slavery yesterday proved to be an effective means for hidden, unethical ends, environmentalism today serves as the acknowledged means for the ruling elite who push their hidden agenda for their own unjust purposes which dare not be admitted.

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Penny and Mark arrived at Bethany and Brad's at 11:00 am. Ryan and Paige were happy to see their Gramps and thrilled to see their Grammy. The kids were wound up tight as a drum and were soon bouncing off the walls as only five and seven-year-olds can.

Bethany served sandwiches for lunch. After eating, the girls ran to town while Brad took Mark and Ryan to Wanapum Dam for an individual tour of the impressive facility.

Since Mark had toured the Bonneville and Grand Coulee Dams in years past, he largely knew what to expect. Brad was able to take them into areas of a dam Mark hadn't previously seen, so that was quite the bonus.

After touring the dam, the three headed back to Richland.

As they neared Hanford, Brad brought up the nuclear reactor which remained in operation beyond the hill. He relayed that proponents yet held out hope that work would someday resume on another reactor which had been mothballed thirty years earlier, before completion.

As Brad continued driving, Mark recollected all the power generation sites he had viewed that day.

Starting out in Vancouver, the Clark Public Utilities' natural gas power plant helped provide energy for the area.

Mark and Penny drove past several biomass plants, at Vancouver's Great Western Malting plant and the old Crown Zellerbach paper mill in Camas. These plants utilized the sun's energy the old-fashioned way, burning combustible material to drive steam generators to create electricity, while co-generating heat for other uses.

On the drive up the Columbia River, they saw hundreds of windmills and he drove past six lower Columbia River hydroelectric dams.

Finally, in Hanford, they drove past the grand-daddy of all power-generation facilities, a nuclear reactor.

About the only types of power generating plants which operated in Washington State that Mark didn't see that day were the Puget Sound oil refineries and the Centralia coal-burning plant.

The group went out for an early evening dinner at a local seafood and steak house where Mark enjoyed his plank salmon. Though normally Mark preferred steak, shrimp, prawns, scallops, clams or lobster, salmon was just right that day.

Penny and Mark left for home the following afternoon after an enjoyable family visit.

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Abbey Galloway arrived punctually for Mark's therapy appointment on Wednesday. As her custom, she first made sure there were no electronic eavesdropping bugs in the home. Mark told her he needed to meet with Peter Dennison as soon as was earthly possible.

As Abbey was leaving, Mark met his new neighbor, Harold Hackett, who was moving in next door. Harold offered that he was recently divorced and enrolled at Clark Community College. He had decided to go back to school and get an associate's degree, even though at 32 years old he'd been away from school for 14 years.

He stated that he was taking only nine credits, to ease into the transition. He stated that he'd therefore be home quite a bit and stated that if Mark needed any help doing anything, not to hesitate to ask.

Harold asked if Abbey was Mark's wife. Mark told him that no, she was his therapist. Harold commented that he didn't know that therapists still made house calls, and asked, with a hint of jesting, "Just what type of therapy are you getting?"

Mark informed Harold that his wife Penny was inside and that he was sure Harold would soon meet her.

Mark thought it best not to provide too much information about his therapist, and tried to let the conversation drop.

Harold was overly persistent, however. Not wanting to be overly rude, Mark finally relayed he needed ongoing treatments to try and regain as much of his former activities as possible and left it at that.

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Peter Dennison arrived in Portland October 27th. He stayed in a hotel near the Portland clinic where Mark had his ‘surgery’ after the television interview the previous December.

The appointment Mark had at the clinic Monday was with Peter rather than the neurologist. Peter’s medical colleague who shared Peter’s political interests had a secure meeting room where Mark and Peter could talk in private, without fear of anyone listening.

Penny drove Mark to the 9:00 am appointment and went in with him. They were called back to the office where Peter was waiting.

“I’m glad to see you again, Peter,” commented Mark, as Penny also greeted him.

“Good morning, Penny. Hello Mark.”

“It sounds as if you have some rather important information to tell me,” said Peter. “If you don’t mind, though, please let me update you on my end first to get that out of the way, so we can then concentrate on your information.”

“That’s fine; I’d like to hear what you’ve been following,” said Mark, even though he was quite anxious to give Peter his update.

Going first, Peter told Mark and Penny of his efforts coordinating the many networked groups he monitored based upon the member’s primary areas of interest.

“You know our network has grown large enough over the years that we’ve divided into committees for better tracking of government action.”

“Yes, I recall you stating that,” replied Mark, as Penny listened in.

“One of our larger committees keeps track of Washington, D.C. political events in general.

“Another group, headed by Dr. Carver here at this clinic, is casting a watchful eye on President Obama’s health care initiatives.

“The third cluster centers their efforts on transportation and infrastructure-related concerns.

“Of all the separate groups I track, however, the group with the most exciting news and what I want to concentrate on today is the group which follows energy production,” said Peter.

“Keep in mind as I tell you all this information that this is the topic with 40 years of almost nothing but continuous disappointments.

“Thankfully the energy committee was growing so large that we recently divided it into four separate subcommittees.

“The first subcommittee follows alternative energy efforts; particularly wind, solar and battery technology. Although the group tracks technological advances, much of their own energy is expended tracking deft political maneuvering which pushes specialized power generation methods well beyond their current economic advantages.

“The hydroelectric subcommittee monitors public and private power generation dams, but necessarily spends an inordinate amount of effort tracking fish regulation proposals and numerous dam-removal schemes.

“A third subcommittee watches over domestic oil and natural gas production.

“This group has been wildly optimistic for the past few years, as revised drilling and production methods restore new life to an old industry.

“The subcommittee members see the growing internal production and flow of oil through the States again as a successful blood transfusion bringing new life back into a once-dying patient.

“Known natural gas reserves are exploding off the charts, pipeline efforts and export facilities are in various stages of approval or under construction.

“The best thing about this is that vast sums of money are no longer necessarily committed off-shore, but now more of it is again destined for America’s heartland,” commented Peter.

“That’s great,” commented Mark. “America needs to be supplying a large part of her own energy needs. It has been a crime to enrich our enemies while we impoverish ourselves.”

“The oil group has increasing concerns that foreign oil markets may soon be trading in currencies other than American dollars,” said Peter. “The impact of this would be that supertankers full of paper dollars would be transported back to America for redemption now in other items. This flood of currency no longer used for foreign oil would lead to rapid inflation in the remaining markets, perhaps even hyperinflation.”

“What do you mean?” asked Mark. “Isn’t oil produced overseas first bought and sold in other currencies now?”

“No, oil is traded in American dollars wherever it is produced,” said Peter. “Pretty nice bit of arranging, wouldn’t you say, which American financiers were able to pull off decades ago?”

“I’ll say,” replied Mark, realizing that this ‘arrangement’ required extensive negotiation and *something* must have been given in return to make it happen. Mark wondered about the implications.

“But the subcommittee I really want to talk about in detail now is our nuclear energy group,” said Peter.

“They are ecstatic to report that five new light water nuclear power plants are actually under construction in the United States today, after a disturbing 30-year hiatus.

“Unfortunately they are still old-design light water reactors, as that is yet the easiest style to actually get approved. But these new reactors are still a much-welcome addition to America’s power-generation capabilities.

“Besides tracking nuclear power plant construction and licensing issues, this subcommittee monitors proposed waste disposal methods and nuclear design alternatives. The latter is where much of the excitement in nuclear power today is found.

“The primary benefit of nuclear power, of course, is the massive amounts of clean energy that are produced from incredibly small amounts of fuel.

“Even low-enriched uranium contains a million times the energy as an equivalent amount of coal or oil.

“Nebraska’s Cooper Nuclear Station, for instance, generates an astounding 791 megawatts of electricity for 24 hours from only six pounds of low-enriched uranium, about the size of a deck of cards.

“To match that output conventionally, it takes 10,000 tons of coal, a million gallons of oil, or nearly a full day’s worth of water running through the 10 turbines of the Wells Dam in Washington State.

“To fuel a 1000 megawatt electrical plant for a year, a coal plant would burn 2.8 million tons of coal — 5.6 billion pounds or 230 trains, each with 100 railroad cars.

“An oil-fired plant would consume some 15 million barrels of oil — 630 million gallons or 10 supertankers.

“A standard nuclear reactor could create the same amount of energy, however, out of only 30 tons of low-enriched uranium—60,000 pounds or one dump-truck and trailer equivalent.”

“I have to say I’m a little ignorant on nuclear power,” admitted Mark.

“Well, natural-occurring uranium is typically found containing mixed concentrations of less than 1% U-235 and over 99% U-238,” Peter explained.

“Reactor fuel is typically enriched to three or four percent U-235 before use. Power generated in typical nuclear reactors is primarily from burning that small amount of U-235.

“U-238 cannot burn in standard light water nuclear reactors. Small amounts, nevertheless, are converted to plutonium in the nuclear reaction; the portion of plutonium which burns in the reaction produces about one-third of the total energy output.

“Since some plutonium and most all of the uranium yet remain in spent nuclear fuel, however, it is hardly to be considered ‘waste’.

“Reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel recaptures some of that energy potential for re-use as new fuel, but reprocessing ended in the United States in 1977 under order of President Carter. This action was ostensibly taken to minimize the chance of nuclear weapon proliferation from the recaptured plutonium, even though no other nuclear country in the world with reprocessing capabilities has ever followed our lead,” said Peter.

“So, that we stopped reprocessing doesn’t really make much of a dent in the availability of plutonium the world over?” asked Mark.

“Exactly. But it is important to also realize that plutonium from nuclear power production sources is a lower-grade, more expensive and more difficult source for making plutonium-type of bombs than are available by other means,” commented Peter.

“But back to reprocessing. The necessary implication of this decision meant that spent nuclear fuel would accumulate more quickly, as reprocessing reduced the volume of high level waste by a factor of four or five, to only 20 or 25% of original volume.

“As stockpiles of spent nuclear fuel grew more quickly without reprocessing and wastes accumulated in inadequate short-term storage facilities, calls from anti-nuclear activists to end all further nuclear activity became more credible.

“Nuclear researchers went to work on the growing problem. Some of them worked tirelessly to come up with various disposal methods such as vitrification, but no method of disposal has been acceptable to anti-nuclear activists, even as the decimal point keeps moving further right.

“Other engineers took a different approach, such as those at Argonne National Laboratory West in Idaho.

“Their research, along with others, provides mounting evidence that continued attempts to stifle the industry will ultimately fail. Though the imposed regulatory burdens against nuclear power are extensive and pervasive, they are nevertheless failing to hold back the promise offered by continued research.

“First is the failed theory of ‘linear no-threshold’ model of radiation protection which assumes cancer risk is directly proportional to dose, from zero. As thousands of studies over many decades examine radiation hormesis, the *beneficial* aspects of low-dose radiation become increasingly supported with a growing mountain of evidence.

“Continued research is ironically proving the prudence of anti-nuclear activists’ opposition to burying long-term nuclear waste, however, but for all the wrong reasons — because it is not ‘waste’ at all, but a valuable resource.

“Spent nuclear fuel yet holds up to 99% of its original potential energy; it is yet capable of being used as a potent fuel source and thus should not be buried where it would remain a valid ecological concern for a very long period of time.

“What if nuclear waste, nuclear proliferation *and* nuclear accident scenarios were all resolved through research? Certainly nuclear energy opponents would come to embrace the clean, powerful source of energy, right?

“Wrong.

“Argonne engineers long ago designed an Integral Fast Reactor nuclear system with a closed fuel cycle and inherent safety.

“Unlike light water reactor waste, waste from Integral Fast Reactors does not contain the most dangerous elements. Instead, all the uranium — including the ever-plentiful U-238 and the dangerous long-lived actinide elements — are used as additional sources of fuel and are burned up in the process to generate copious amounts of power.

“The implication of this is spectacular output; IFR reactors are 100-times *more* powerful than standard light water nuclear reactors from the same amount of fuel, as nearly all of it is now burned up to create unbelievable amounts of power.

“The small amount of actual waste produced from Integral Fast Reactors need monitoring for only 300 years; the 10,000-year stability criteria designed for current waste disposal sites needed for light water reactors would be wholly unnecessary.

“Since Integral Fast Reactors have a closed fuel cycle, there is no need to transfer any nuclear material offsite for processing. Once the nuclear fuel has been used, it is removed and minimally processed onsite to recycle any of the remaining useful elements back into new fuel for the reactor.

“Integral Fast Reactors may also be designed to be net users of plutonium, eliminating nuclear weapons proliferation concerns.

“Integral Fast Reactors leave behind virtually no long-lived waste, *while importantly they can use all the spent nuclear fuel lingering in storage facilities as additional fuel sources*, to create an abundance of power out of the former ‘waste’.

“Uranium need not even be mined for centuries until IFR reactors first use up all the ‘wastes’ from light water reactors currently lingering in inadequate storage facilities.

“Then all the depleted uranium which was left over after making the enriched uranium fuels may next be used, before then finally switching to use uranium found in its natural state as the primary fuel source.”

“Wow, Integral Fast Reactors sound great from both a power production standpoint and nuclear waste concerns,” replied Mark. “That must mean they are terribly dangerous to operate.”

“Actually, they are just the opposite,” answered Peter. “Integral Fast Reactors are also inherently safe. They offer passive protection needing no activation of any mechanical device or external control; no moderation is ever needed to control the nuclear reaction in an Integral Fast Reactor. They were proven safe at Argonne decades ago with their operating reactor.”

“What, are you saying this type of reactor was actually built and operated, decades ago?” asked Mark.

“Yes, and their safety is one of their key features,” stated Peter.

“Engineers at Argonne intentionally stopped the coolant flow to their own operating test Integral Fast Reactor in 1986, which happened unintentionally at Chernobyl only a few weeks later.

“While the Chernobyl events ended in disaster, the Argonne IFR plant simply shut down, automatically, on its own.

“Then the Argonne engineers brought the plant back to full power. In the afternoon, they isolated the electrical system from the nuclear plant so it could no longer mechanically pull away the heat being built up inside the reactor.

“The reactor quietly shut itself down, again automatically.

“The IFR system was built and technically proven; it operated flawlessly as designed even under conditions critical for standard nuclear reactors.

“The Nuclear Regulatory Commission pre-approved the IFR design with no objections or licensing impediments.

“All opposing counter-arguments voiced against nuclear power having any merit whatsoever were resolved with one glamorous, proven design which was capable of operating a 1000 megawatt electricity facility for one year with only one metric ton of natural or depleted uranium.

“Cheap, plentiful fuel was assured for millions of years; high level wastes were eliminated, while only miniscule amounts of lower-level waste needed monitoring now for only several centuries,” said Peter.

“Then why in the world don’t we have hundreds of Integral Fast Reactors operating in the United States today?”

“Because at the recommendation of the Clinton administration, Congress eliminated the final funding of the IFR study program in 1994, effectively shutting down the project which had already run for a decade, three years before the project’s scheduled completion.

“Argonne’s Integral Fast Reactor was shut down *before* the IFR study could be finalized. Integral Fast Reactors were just *too* good, they were politically unpalatable for their vast economic advantage over their competition,” stated Peter.

“In essence you are saying that the resistance to these new reactors provides compelling evidence that the voiced environmental concerns against nuclear power never really mattered politically, but that it was *unvoiced* political concerns all along which actually matter,” argued Mark. “The voiced arguments against nuclear power were simply the means used to control it, because it threatened to destabilize power generation in the United States, threatening competitive industries. Is that it?”

“I hadn’t thought about things like that before in such clear terms; but I don’t think I can argue against your point,” said Peter, as he began thinking through the ramifications.

Mark realized environmentalism could be hijacked to use fear with arbitrary government as a potent weapon in the 20th century just as easily as abolition of slavery was hijacked to ensure vast banking profits in the 19th.

In both cases, valid ends could be easily transformed into adept means to pursue hidden ends which then need not be mentioned. Add to the mix a sufficient amount of money and the end result could be all but assured.

Mark recollected the Washington Public Power Supply System's bold early-70's plan to build five nuclear power plants. It was obviously a significant start toward the early goal of an average of ten nuclear power plants per State.

That WPPSS mockingly instead became known as 'whoops' as it soon became the largest municipal bond default in history and a precedent-setting case against nuclear energy helped set back industry thirty years.

Mismanagement was alleged.

Even though many dozens of light water reactors had been readily built over the previous two decades, suddenly it was supposedly beyond man's ability to yet construct them in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Never mind that the WPPSS plants were built in an era of rapidly changing regulations. The plants were incessantly redesigned and rebuilt, some components famously even well over a dozen times.

In the end, it proved futile for the consortium of utility companies paying for the power plants to attempt to finish more than one plant, so arbitrary were the changing requirements.

Then, of course, Mark thought about the never-ending, massive Hanford cleanup from its nine cold-war era nuclear reactors. The estimated cleanup cost in 2013 was an *additional* \$114.8 billion, with activities lasting until 2060.

Mark knew that obviously much more is known about nuclear power today than in 1945, 1955, or 1965.

Yet he also thought that arguably enough was still known then to have an adequate grasp the situation and give realistic hazard assessments, even if grossly understated by today's standards and even if engineering recommendations weren't always followed as war expediency and secrecy over-ruled long-term safety concerns.

A cavalier attitude then understandably led to the pendulum swinging the other way, especially once the war ended and Cold War threats later began diminishing.

However, to protest all things nuclear is a violent and unwarranted swing far too far in the other direction and admits too much.

If nuclear opponents were against accumulating spent fuel, why wouldn't they be satisfied with burning it up in IFR power plants as additional fuel sources? Certainly that would be better than vitrifying the waste and storing it for all eternity, or better than having it languish in inadequate, temporary storage facilities as is currently the case.

But, of course, Integral Fast Reactors cannot burn up the wastes because they haven't been put into production, because they lack sufficient final U.S. regulatory approval. And regulatory approval of IFR technology cannot be yet given, of course, because the billion-dollar world-class IFR study was intentionally terminated by the Clinton administration before it could be completed. And the Clinton administration acted because powerful interests compelled them to act accordingly.

Peter began speaking again, after contemplating Mark's comments.

“Since man first learned to use fire, he has been harnessing energy to suit his needs. First wood was used to cook food and keep warm. Oil lamps then began illuminating the darkness of night.

“Coal became substituted for wood in many instances for its dense store of energy, especially once steam engines were developed.

“Electricity was soon harnessed, while gas and diesel engines offered newfound mobility.

“But once man split the atom, the power which once took hundreds of railroad cars of coal could now be produced with infinitesimal amounts of uranium which could easily fit into the palm of one’s hand.

“Reactors running on thorium, uranium hydride, or other researched fuels offer to help bridge the gap toward plutonium-fueled power plants in the distant future, as researchers set their sights on fusion reactors.

“In Greek mythology, the Titan Prometheus was eternally punished by the god Zeus for giving man fire, which enabled civilization to develop.

“The punishment then for conquering nuclear energy must necessarily be monstrous indeed.

“I am beginning to see the turning inside-out of America’s founding principles as the United States’ monstrous political punishment for splitting the atom,” said Peter, “even if it means sending man back to the Stone Age.”

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It was Mark’s turn to fill in Peter with his discoveries, but first they ate the deli sandwiches brought in for them for lunch.

After finishing the meal, Mark pulled out copies of Chester's documents he had printed off on an old analog printer. After all, he certainly wasn't ready yet for copies to be found stored on a memory chip of some digital printer.

As Mark went into detail about Chester's bone-chilling journal and supporting documents, Peter listened with rapt attention even as Penny's eyes glazed over.

Penny began thinking about how much she missed her grandchildren which moved over three hours away and how nice it was to recently visit them. It was amazing to see how much they had grown not only physically, but also intellectually.

Little Ryan no longer had adorable difficulty pronouncing his T's. He had long pronounced 'toy' as 'thoy', 'time' as 'thime', and 'talk' as 'thock.'

When Paige was quite young, she had more difficulty with her S's; thus 'school' was 'cool' and 'smell' was 'pell.'

As Mark rambled on, Penny continued to reminisce about all the pleasant hours spent with her grandchildren. She was thankful Blake's boys still lived in Vancouver, so she could see them more often. She and Mark hadn't been seeing the boys quite as much lately, given fall had arrived and the weather had turned wet.

Come spring, however, Penny envisioned they'd be watching the boys playing t-ball, soccer, and come the new school year, flag football. With Daphne homeschooling the boys, they played sports through city-sponsored leagues and church rather than through the public schools.

Peter's mind grew weary thinking through the implications of the new information he was hearing.

Peter had labored forty years in the field which chose him, after his painful introduction to evil which in comparison to what he heard today was mere child's play.

Over the decades, Peter had been exposed to more extensive evil than his introduction, but now he was hearing evidence of an evil so deeply sinister and extensive that it caught even him off guard.

Peter told Mark he'd touch base again tomorrow once he had a chance to process the new information a little more thoroughly.

Chapter Eight

Penny dropped off Mark for another meeting with Peter before Peter left town.

“Before getting to my work, I wanted to talk a little more about yours first,” offered Mark.

“Sure, what is on your mind?”

“I was thinking about the 1970’s plan to build an average of 10 nuclear reactors in each State.

“If that plan had been realized, America would have developed an abundance of low-cost clean power, which would have undoubtedly altered America’s recent history punctuated by foreign skirmishes over energy concerns.

“An alternate history of extensive nuclear power production would have undoubtedly affected quite a number of businesses, wouldn’t you think?” asked Mark.

“I would have to agree,” responded Peter.

“500 nuclear power plants in the United States would have undoubtedly threatened profits in the oil and gas industries, right?” stated Mark.

“Yes, but of course increased supply of power resulting in lowered costs could have stimulated demand as new opportunities suddenly came on line because they now penciled out, thereby increasing demand again,” replied Peter.

“Yes, I agree, but it is much harder to quantify that ‘what if’ scenario, while oil and gas producers may not be willing to wait quite so long for their market to return.”

“Agreed.”

“Concentrating on the production side, oil and gas producers must have hated nuclear energy, and thus may have aided efforts to eliminate it,” argued Mark.

“Perhaps, but even with widespread nuclear energy, oil and gas would still be necessary, of course, as America’s mobile fleet of cars, trucks, trains, ships and planes need the high density of easily-transportable power offered by oil and gas.

“And then one has to consider America’s domestic production of oil and gas suffered right along with nuclear energy proposals. So it couldn’t likely be this group of men operating behind the scenes against nuclear power, unless they were willing to cut their own throats with rabid environmentalism,” argued Peter.

“Oh, I wasn’t necessarily thinking only of American production of gas and oil. I’m just trying to think through a possible scenario, to have a theory which could be tested for verification or repudiation, to try and understand how things may have come to pass.”

Letting his mind wander, Mark pondered how rabid environmentalism may have gained a foothold in the United States. He figured his best chance to understand it would be to take current events and work backward from them, developing a hypothesis about how known conditions may have perhaps come about.

“Obviously, America did not stop *using* gas and oil even as domestic production was all but shut down; she simply stopped *producing* it in great quantities and instead began importing much of her gas and oil from abroad.

“Thus foreign oil and gas producers were major benefactors of decreased American energy production,” Mark stated.

“Of course, being foreign, these groups had very little direct impact on American policy. No, it had to be domestic-based influence over Congress to shut down American energy production to shift production overseas,” replied Peter.

“Americans are known the world over as having an independent mindset, of doing things their own way. Oil roughnecks from the 1930’s, 1940’s, and 1950’s were certainly no exception. These rugged men were producers who knew how to work hard and were proud to earn their profits honorably and by the integrity of their minds and efforts,” answered Mark, as the two men went back and forth as one mind thinking through possible scenarios of past events which got America to where she was today.

“Financial wizards, on the other hand, dislike competition, especially against prosperous adversaries. Too many financiers have readily proven they like controlled markets where they can direct the outcomes, taking in assured profits for themselves while sharing adverse risks with the public.

“American concepts of independence gel against such concepts of ‘cooperation’,” said Peter.

“If financial insiders tried to organize a domestic oil cartel several generations ago, I hardly think they would have found success convincing hundreds or thousands of independent-minded oilmen to join them as they attempted to corner the local market,” said Mark.

“The later shutdown of American gas and oil would thus have served as the appropriate punishment by insiders against those parties who earlier refused to cooperate,” replied Peter.

“In other words, in free enterprise, the oilmen had no use for the money men. In a controlled economy, the former pays the price as the latter shuts down domestic production and brings in liquid gold from offshore.

“Rebuffed domestically, the financiers built their cooperative cartels in other regions around the globe where pliable oilmen could be made if not found, since oil was readily transportable across oceans.

“You know, your earlier comment that oil produced anywhere on the globe is traded in American dollars admits far too much,” said Mark.

“Yes, to obtain such uniformity the world over where there is little inherent uniformity, massive negotiations had to have taken place and then stay in place even as the world changed. That would be no small feat,” stated Peter.

“Agreed. The linchpin in the financiers’ plan must have been that they wouldn’t provide access to the world’s domestic markets for foreign oil or invest any of their money in foreign oil production facilities unless all the oil extracted would only be traded in American dollars.

“And the oilfield sheiks must have demanded American military protection to safeguard and ensure their income stream. Such ‘cooperation’ proved very profitable to all involved,” argued Mark, “as their competitors were ruined.”

“Overseas back-room deals were negotiated, import facilities approved, supertankers planned, and grand schemes laid it place.

“The deals were cut, treaties were ratified, and the noose was set. Oil produced anywhere on the globe could only now be bought with American dollars.

“Backing the greenback with black gold assured that massive amounts of printed dollars would find a ready-market worldwide, ensuring even greater profit for the financiers which emitted them.

“With everything in place, the environmental lobby was set loose to bring the uncooperative American oil industry to its knees and destroy the financier’s direct competition. Yes that all makes a fair amount of sense, even though we have nothing to prove those events,” stated Peter.

“Nuclear energy, of course, was another matter. Unlike transportable oil and gas, foreign nuclear power plants have no effective way to power American industry.

“Thus, rather than be managed with foreign cartels, domestic nuclear energy was targeted for elimination, so greater amounts of foreign oil could instead be sold and transported.

“America’s early lead in nuclear energy, research and development was sabotaged. New plants were made wholly unattractive to investors as spectacular defaults were engineered and assured by ever-changing ‘standards’.

“Nuclear wastes were allowed to build up and Integral Fast Reactor research was stopped when it was shown to all but eliminate nuclear concerns,” said Mark.

“Untold volumes of American dollars went overseas to keep the black blood flowing back, even if the red blood from young patriotic Americans were occasionally spilt overseas to best ensure it.

“As you stated, this is all conjecture. But it does at least allow us to come up with a plausible theory to begin working to verify or disprove.

“It is getting late, and I wanted to talk with you more about your information before I head out,” Peter offered.

They talked another hour before Penny was scheduled to pick up Mark. The time went by rather quickly and before they knew it she had arrived. They said their good-byes and soon went their own ways, to each continue with their important work.

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Mark kept himself busy writing about Chester Adamson’s discoveries so readers could soon be informed of the tragic turn from

America's founding principles for the greedy benefit of an unprincipled few.

As Mark continued to write Chester's story, the weeks soon turned into months, but he was progressing well with his work.

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At Mark's therapy appointment, Abigail stated that Peter would be coming back to Vancouver the following week. He had informed his associates of Chester's research and the group had discussed some of the implications.

Mark slowly walked Abbey out to her car when she was ready to leave, talking casually about his grandkids.

When Mark returned toward his apartment, his new neighbor Harold Hackett stopped him for a chat.

After being asked how school was going, Harold relayed that he was still adjusting to the life of school and homework.

Harold commented that he hadn't seen much of Penny, but was really surprised how little he ever saw of Mark.

"It seems as if you are on house arrest," commented Harold.

"I guess to some extent I am," replied Mark, unsure exactly how to answer. "Penny takes me to the occasional doctor's appointment, we visit family intermittently, and we try to make it to church regularly, but other than that we are mostly homebodies."

"So how do you spend your day?" asked Harold.

"Oh, on nothing too exciting. Getting up, getting showered and dressed. Eating. Reading. A short walk. Taking an afternoon nap as my body begins to wear down. Eating. Taking another short walk.

Watching a little television or playing card games and going to bed, I guess,” commented Mark.

“I hear typing on a keyboard during the day, though it is quite faint,” commented Harold.

“Oh, that must be Penny,” replied Mark. “She is trying her luck at writing some children’s stories. She won’t let me read them yet.”

That was Mark and Penny’s cover story for computer usage. Penny had written a few pages on her first story over the past six months. Mark never said she was progressing very fast.

“Oh, I see,” said Harold. “I guess that would explain how she fills her day.”

In reality, Penny helped Mark to get more writing accomplished by freeing him up of activities which would distract him.

Harold seemed interested in keeping the conversation going, as if he had something he wanted to talk to Mark about, but he never got to any point.

Mark finally said that he was getting tired and had to go inside, which he did.

Harold seemed to have an agenda to which Mark couldn’t exactly put a finger on. Penny was always much better at reading people than was Mark. Mark typically trusted too easily, at least until someone overtly wronged him.

Penny also couldn’t quite figure out Harold Hackett. “There is something up with him. He seems to be a nice enough guy, but we don’t lead anywhere near as interesting of lives to have a stranger seem so interested in us,” commented Penny.

“I think we ought to be careful what we admit to Harold,” Mark concluded. Penny agreed.

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Penny drove Mark back to the doctor's office to have another meeting with Peter. This time Dr. Glen Carver, Mark's neurosurgeon, was also in the office for the meeting. Peter had brought his long-standing friend and colleague Dr. Carver up to speed on Chester's information before he had left town on his last visit.

"The one thing all my colleagues agreed upon was that once you broadcast this information, you will undoubtedly be a marked man," said Peter.

"Good thing my name is Mark, then," Mark joked, trying to lighten the mood after seeing Peter's serious concern for his well-being.

"All jokes aside, you absolutely must plan accordingly," stated Peter.

"Agreed," commented Dr. Carver. "Your information, backed up with Chester's credible evidence, is very damaging to many powerful people, even if all those original scoundrels are long dead."

Penny was glad to hear that she wasn't the only one concerned with their future. Whenever she had said much to Mark in private over the past few months, he was mostly silent on the matter.

"My oldest trusted friend has a secluded mountain retreat which he has made available for your use as long as you need it. It has room for not only for the both of you, but also your children and their spouses and all your grandkids, if they come. You will want for nothing," commented Peter.

"Wow," replied Mark. "I don't know what to say."

"Say you accept," replied Dr. Carver.

“One of my main concerns if I went into hiding is who would help disseminate the information. If Janet Davidson, Steve Fredrickson, or Sarah Jacobs should again stand up and be counted, I don’t want to let them stand exposed for my work in my place,” commented Mark.

“In battle, very rarely will a general ever go anywhere near the front lines,” commented Peter, “for good reason. They are simply too important to the future of the effort to take such extreme and unnecessary risks. They must preserve themselves to make sure the rest of the efforts of all the brave men and women who follow are best applied to the important work they all face.”

“But it then looks like I am a coward,” replied Mark.

“Rest assured the bravest are those who can order good men and women to jump in harm’s way in their stead and in their place,” replied Dr. Carver. “Take me, for instance. I know my unique skills are best put to use in the relative safety where I can perform the delicate surgeries my patients require in order to best ensure they have every chance to live fulfilled and productive lives. If I am killed because I took foolish, unnecessary and needless risks, then all the patients I could have helped save will die or live tortured lives.”

“In your instance, I agree with you,” said Mark. “But I’m not so sure about me avoiding the trenches.”

“I think you have far more to offer the freedom movement,” replied Peter, knowing Mark’s weakness, his passion for doing what he must while he can.

“I do have some strong ideas on how to get there from here,” said Mark, referring to liberty, from tyranny.

“My first book basically looked at the here and now. This next book looks back to how it all began. My last book will look to the future to help map out how to get back to our rightful destination.”

“Exactly,” answered Peter. “You just answered why you mustn’t go to the front lines, why you must protect yourself as you protect your family — because each of us must do what he or she does best.

“With you, you have a unique gift as a navigator who can see well through the fog. You admittedly are not a captain or even a good choice as co-pilot. But the captain must always know where to steer the ship. That is where you come in, to help navigate the course, to know where we are and plot the path where we need to go.

“But neither should you take on the role of a deck-hand. If you do things which you are not well-qualified to do or if you waste your talents, then the whole ship is in peril because they are lost and the whole crew knows it. You must stay with your present work and plot that pathway to calm seas, clear skies, and fair weather. Your work helps keep people calm and concentrating on their own work to best ensure everyone gets through safely to the other side. Each must do his part.

“Your most important work is to blatantly expose base tyranny for the whole world to see. You admittedly are nothing of a promoter, someone who can sell the idea. Leave that to Janet Davidson and Sarah Jacobs and those people they are training. You must work to come up with the idea and let others broadcast it. You must do what you do best; not those things which you cannot adequately perform.

“You can’t jeopardize the vital goal of American liberty which overrides your insignificant concerns just because some may perhaps think less of you.”

“Very well, you convinced me,” replied Mark. “I do believe my insights can help delineate a proper path to restore limited government under the spirit of the Constitution.”

Penny made a big sigh of relief. Before those words, she had been seeing scenes of her life flash before her eyes.

Chapter Nine

Sarah Jacob's last comment brought Mark back to the present, March 28, 2014. It was a private meeting the day before his 52nd birthday party. They were meeting at a private office Abbey arranged for them, where they were ensured their privacy.

Also at the meeting were Penny, Janet Davidson and Steve Fredrickson. Mark brought the visitors up to speed on Chester Adamson's research which got him killed in 1871.

"I don't really know what to say about your latest information," admitted Sarah, who as an investigative reporter never lacked words. "Your research takes my breath away; it's so disturbing and vile that it will take me a little while to process it."

Janet didn't even say that much, but stared at her glass of water. She seemed unable to gather her thoughts.

Steve had his bearings. He was ready to go and find a few deceased men's graves, dig them up and desecrate them, just in case such actions could possibly have any effect on those men's tortured souls who were getting their comeuppance in eternity which they did not get here on earth.

Steve's initial look was of vengeance. He was a firm believer in 'an eye for an eye'. Actually, that wasn't really true; he much favored seven times the wrath, or seven times seven, in this case.

Mark knew his listeners needed time to gather their thoughts, and now wouldn't be the time to speak of future plans.

"It is probably time to go," Mark stated as he looked at his watch when it was apparent the meeting was winding down.

"We may want to leave the office separately, in case anyone is watching us," stated Mark.

"I am beginning to understand your sense of paranoia," Janet offered, finally digesting enough of the new information to again be

able to function. “You are right; it is not paranoia if someone is actually after you. Now I better understand why someone would be yet watching you. I’m sorry if I gave you a hard time about it before.”

Janet and Sarah went out to Janet’s rental car and rode back to the hotel together.

Steve left 15 minutes later. Penny and Mark left last, a short while later.

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Penny gathered up the party goods in a couple of boxes. They planned to arrive at Hannah’s, Mark’s mother’s place, an hour early to set up for the few guests and family who would be coming.

As Mark and Penny were walking out to the car, Harold Hackett stopped them. Seeing the party streamers and balloons, he asked about the event.

“It’s a birthday party for Mark,” offered Penny, who realized too late she may have provided too much information.

“Oh, it’s your birthday?” Harold asked Mark.

“Yes, it was yesterday, but we’re having the party today, on the weekend,” replied Mark.

“May I come?” asked Harold. “I like birthday parties and I would be thrilled to come to yours.”

Penny and Mark looked at one another, somewhat shocked that Harold was so bold as to invite himself. Mark knew he didn’t want Harold to come, that his own uneasiness over Harold should be a sufficient warning to steer clear of him.

Penny started talking.

Mark interrupted her, knowing he shouldn't let Penny bear the responsibility of answering Harold. "It's just that Penny isn't throwing the party. So we don't feel right bringing anyone who wasn't invited by the hostess. I'm sure you understand."

"Oh come on, you are the guest. Of course you could bring along just one other person," argued Harold.

"We want everyone there to be comfortable; to know one another, you know," offered Penny.

"Oh, I can make anyone feel comfortable; I'm easy to talk with," Harold admitted, as he pushed ever harder. "I'm sure with one phone call, you could get me approved to come. What do you say, aren't you willing to at least check?"

Mark and Penny just didn't know what to make of their neighbor's bold insistence. They were flattered, and certainly didn't want to come across as standoffish, but they yet suspected their uneasiness had some basis, some merit.

"All right," answered Penny, to Mark's disappointment. "I'll put these things in the car and go back in and make the call."

"Here, I'll take your box and you can use my cell phone," said Harold, giving his phone to Penny and grabbing the box from her.

When Penny had offered to make the call to pass off the decision beyond them, she was figuring on making the call in the privacy of her home. Now she was more or less stuck making the call in front of Harold, greatly limiting her chances of giving any hints on her desired answer.

Now it would look like they *wanted* their neighbor to come; why else would they be calling?

"Well, good news," replied Penny after getting off the call. "You are invited. You can follow us there if you are ready to go now. Or we can give you directions."

“I was kind of hoping to catch a ride with you,” again offered Harold. “My car is on the fritz; I’m not taking it in to the shop until Monday. Which reminds me, could you pick me up at the shop on Monday?”

Ignoring his last question, Mark answered, “Ok, we’re taking the car since we sold my pickup last month. You’ll have to ride in the backseat where there isn’t very much legroom.”

“No problem, I’m flexible,” said Harold, letting go Monday’s ride for the moment.

“Very well, grab your things,” said Mark.

“I’m ready to go now,” said Harold, “as long as you are not expecting me to bring a present.”

“No, I’m not expecting that,” replied Mark, with a sigh.

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The barbeque at Hannah’s went smoothly. Mark’s brother and two of his sisters and some of their spouses were there, as were Blake, Daphne and the boys. Mark’s father Vincent was also present. Sarah, Steve and Janet rounded out the other guests.

Harold honed right in on the latter three, and spent an inordinate amount of time with each of them. Steve was tight-lipped and didn’t offer anything about himself. He turned the talk to sports, which he followed sufficiently to always have something else to talk about if need be.

Sarah was able to turn the conversation to Harold quite well, to find out more of his story. She sought to play on his vanity, saying she happened to be working on a story about divorced couples reimagining their new lives after divorce. When she asked to take his

picture for the story, Harold quickly excused himself to use the restroom and avoided her for the rest of the afternoon.

Janet had greater difficulty keeping Harold's questions diverted from her. Thus she turned the conversations to her former work where she had been 'somebody', the Treasurer of the United States.

She figured that her former work was a safe topic, and wowed her inquisitor with facts about government expenses and debt. She had more than ample information about which she could talk all afternoon, if need be.

The lunch party was dwindling down by 3:00. All but Harold helped clean up and everyone left by 3:30 pm.

Harold thanked Mark and Penny for their hospitality.

"Say, what about that ride Monday morning?"

Since Mark didn't drive, it was up to Penny, but that hardly meant that Mark wanted Penny to be in the vehicle alone with their odd neighbor.

"What time did you say it would be at?" asked Penny.

"8:30 am, in Hazel Dell," answered Harold.

"Very well," said Penny, as she and Mark went inside.

"I'm coming with you," said Mark.

"You bet you are," she replied.

At 5:30 pm, after a short nap, Mark and Penny quietly snuck out of their apartment to meet their out-of-town visitors for dinner. They ate at a quiet restaurant that offered a fair amount of privacy in the high-backed booths which isolated noise quite well table-to-table.

Once the waitress brought their drinks and took their orders, Sarah told Mark and Penny how quick their neighbor was to escape once she asked to take his picture and write about him.

“There’s something fishy about him,” relayed Sarah.

“Yes,” said Mark. “It could well be that we are being watched. We’ll have to be even more careful from here on out.”

“I have met many federal officers in my day,” said Steve. “I’d bet my right arm he works for some agency.”

“Well, that pretty much settles it for me. I’m keeping my distance; you know what type of scoundrels work in government,” Mark said with a smile and a wink aimed at Steve and Janet.

Wanting to quickly change the subject without giving any credence to Mark’s playful jab, Janet volunteered that she couldn’t help but ponder the revelations Mark had given them the day before.

Becoming serious again, Mark relayed the safety concerns Peter and Dr. Carver had voiced over any person who helped broadcast the information.

Sarah bravely spoke up. “It is an investigative reporter’s moral duty to report vital information especially such as this.”

Mark further relayed the last conversation he had with Peter and Glen Carver. He stated that he felt compelled to write a third book, which would discuss his ideas about the proper corrective path to restore the United States back to their rightful place.

Once he finished his current work, Mark stated that he and his family would be secluding themselves until his final work was finished. At that time, he relayed that only then would he publicly join in the fray, although he expected his family would remain isolated for an additional period of time.

Janet said she understood Mark’s reasons and did not necessarily fault him or his plans, but pointed out that most anyone could always come up with sufficient excuses to avoid making a stand for principle.

“I cannot speak for anyone else,” stated Janet. “But I for one will stand and be counted, again. I do not necessarily think we can afford

to delay the confrontation against evil any longer, as it just seems to get stronger with each passing day.

“This new information will surely give me the added ammunition I need to be able to make great strides to create change; real and lasting change for the better.”

Steve spoke up. “Well, it looks unanimous among us Three Musketeers, that we will again join in the battle, and have a great time doing so. I know a lot of people who will absorb this information and change their outlook on their own personal responsibility.”

“Just when are you looking to release your current work?” asked Janet, towards Mark.

“I am nearly done. I would expect I should be ready to release it within one or two weeks, at the longest,” Mark volunteered.

“May 1, 2014 is on a Thursday, four-and-a-half weeks away. Can everyone be ready for a Mayday call few will ever forget as we reclaim our lost country?” asked Sarah, with a flair for dramatic reporting.

“Yes, I can be ready,” admitted Mark. “That sounds like a great day to break the story.”

“That will give me time to change my presentations, and add in a few more stops,” said Janet. “What do you say, Steve, are you ready to step up our seminars?”

“You bet,” admitted Steve. “My brother in the Secret Service has followed our work for the past year, with great interest. I think now would be a good time for me to bring him up to speed before we break the news in May, so he can join us from the get-go. He could help bring a lot of influence to our work, plus I have a feeling I will need the additional help monitoring the threat level against us.”

“I agree that you’ll undoubtedly need additional help on that front,” admitted Mark.

“I also have four buddies from my marshal days who I’d like to also bring along when the time is right, but for now they can wait to be told until after our May Day release,” relayed Steve.

“Ok, then, I’ll be breaking my story in The *Washington Sentinel* in the morning edition, May 1st,” said Sarah.

“And I’ll release my book into the public domain at 12:01 am that same day, placing the information on the www.BaldJustice.com website and emailing it out to my contacts,” stated Mark.

“Well before that day, my family will be moved into seclusion and you won’t hear directly from me,” stated Mark. “I’ll make sure Peter Dennison gets you all copies of my research and book, especially you Sarah, so you can write your story. He will be contacting all of you personally in Washington, D.C. He is a wonderful ally with an extensive network of well-placed individuals.”

“Once I get your information, Mark, I will be telling my editor that I am taking April off, but that he needs to leave open for me a four-page special edition cover wrap for the newspaper on May 1st.

“I will remain in seclusion to write the story and won’t be back until it breaks. No one will know what I’m working on, and my editor will simply be keeping the slot open for me, telling others nothing more than what they need to know when they need to know it. Since it will be its own four-page spread, it won’t involve any other groups until production.”

“That sounds like a great plan,” offered Mark. “You should have my information in two weeks or less.”

“That’s great. I have more than enough information to start roughing it out now and getting things tentatively laid out in my mind. Once I get all your documentation, I can finish putting it together and fill in the details,” said Sarah.

Chapter Ten

Mark finished his book, completing it on April 7th. Penny started her preparations getting ready to move, but didn't start packing. Mark asked her not to draw any attention to them until Peter Dennison had an electronic copy of his work.

Mark had his last therapy appointment with Abigail on April 9th. Mark gave her an electronic backup of his new book to deliver to Peter who was ready to leave for Washington, D.C. Mark asked Abigail to make sure Peter provided Sarah a copy right away for her story and also asked to provide Janet and Steve copies well before May 1st.

Mark also gave a copy directly to Dr. Carver, along with printed copies of Chester's research, in case something should happen to him or Abbey.

Once Dr. Carver and Abbey both had copies of both Mark's book and Chester's research documents, Penny got packing.

They only packed as if they were going on a week's vacation. They were not willing to let any attachment to their possessions help serve as any type of signal which could endanger their lives. Besides, they had nothing valuable anyway, as they had lost all their possessions a year-and-a-half earlier when their house had been leveled in an explosion.

They had a family dinner with Mark's family on Friday night and Penny's family on Saturday night.

After Mark had backed up his computer onto a small portable hard drive that he would now keep with him, he removed his desktop computer's hard drive and took it with them to his in-laws.

Out in the shop, Mark used the acetylene torch and melted his old hard drive. Certainly no data retrieval was possible within that molten slag heap.

They told their families that Mark was taking Penny on a surprise trip, allowing them to be vague about the trip's duration and location.

Both Mark's mom and Penny's dad had been made aware of the principle details of their actions a few days earlier, though not their destination.

As Penny's father was 79 years old, it was all too possible he and Penny were saying good-bye for the last time, as Penny would remain in hiding for the indefinite future.

Penny had a very tough time saying good-bye and resented Mark's actions more than she cared to admit. Penny still wasn't dealing overly well with her mom's death and she wasn't ready yet to now say good-bye to her father. But her father understandably wasn't willing to leave his son and other daughters, nor all his other grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Blake, Daphne, and the boys were already at the Wyoming destination, arriving in the van Peter Dennison had arranged for them to take.

They had been there several days and they were fitting right in. They took great precautions getting there, to make sure no one knew where they were going or what was going on.

Bethany and her kids had been dropped off by their ride Peter had arranged for them, late in the afternoon the day after Blake and Daphne arrived.

Brad remained behind, as he was unwilling to leave his job at the dam, and didn't figure he was in any direct danger anyway.

For everyone's safety, he didn't know where Bethany and the kids would be going, but was given a location he could go if he ever felt his safety was endangered. He was rather miffed about Bethany going into hiding, but given the circumstances about which he had only a general idea, felt it prudent to err on the side of caution.

Mark collected his yet-unexamined research findings, Chester's adopted satchel and papers, and a novel from Mark's past Peter had given him at their last meeting as a going-away present. Penny and Mark left in Penny's car, heading out to the distant countryside in the evening after dark.

It was obvious no one followed them within headlight distance.

They met up with Abigail who was waiting for them at the pre-arranged rendezvous location. They wasted precious little time transferring from one vehicle to the other and left Penny's car there. Abigail continued away from town, but later took an alternate path back towards it.

Abigail arranged for the sale of Penny's car to a used-car dealer she knew who would retrieve the car the next day. Mark and Penny had already signed over a Bill of Sale.

Handing Penny an envelope of cash for the car, Abbey also gave them new identification in new names.

In return, Mark and Penny gave Abbey several letters to mail to their brothers and sisters after May 1st, explaining matters and saying goodbye for a while. The letters also explained that they had donated their personal belongings to the Salvation Army who would be picking up the items May 1st.

Penny felt like she was going into Witness Protection. It was certainly similar, though not as formal. It was surprisingly well funded, although it worked as well as it did mainly due to numerous volunteers who provided the primary efforts.

It was really more of a modern-day Underground Railroad, Abbey informed her, helping ensure freedom for people none too free.

Still a distance from town, Abbey pulled up in front of a chauffeured motorhome that was parked at a wide spot on a secluded road. The middle-aged couple therein would be taking the

Evanston's non-stop to Boise, Idaho, as they could remain out of sight of any traffic cameras, and wouldn't need to stop for fuel, food, drink or bathrooms.

As their chauffeur drove through the night, the gentle rocking of the motorhome quickly lulled Mark to sleep. Penny had greater difficulty, but soon also fell asleep, not awakening until the RV stopped at its destination, outside Boise.

Knocking on the door of the remote house, Mark offered the phrase to the older gentleman who opened the door that Peter had told him to provide, "Is there any room at the inn?"

The gentleman responded appropriately, "There is always room in the inn for two Lovebirds."

Hearing the response, Penny could not help but laugh, even though she knew what would be the correct reply.

Mark and Penny said good-bye to their gracious overnight host and hostess and thanked them for their hospitality and generosity. As they went inside, their former host pulled his RV back out onto the road and continued toward Reno, Nevada.

After their new host showed them a bedroom they could use for rest before their evening departure, he asked what they would like for breakfast.

Penny answered a cup of coffee, while Mark asked if there were any milk and cereal.

Once the host said he was whipping up some French toast, scrambled eggs, and bacon for himself and offered to make more for them, Mark admitted that those foods sounded better.

After breakfast, the three adjourned to the family room to continue their discussion more comfortably.

The host told his guests that Peter Dennison used his services on occasion, that the two had been friends for decades. The man

thought very highly of Peter and wholeheartedly agreed with his mission. Since Peter thought well of Mark, the host would do whatever he could to help his guests.

Peter had arranged for another friend to provide Mark and Penny with use of an older, non-descript car which was in otherwise excellent running condition. The car was outside, full of fuel and would be Mark and Penny's transportation for the indefinite future.

There was also a scooter-carrier mounted in the vehicle's trailer hitch, with a box permanently mounted on the carrier. Inside the box were four 5-gallon cans of fuel, to make sure they wouldn't need to stop for any reason.

Mark was a little nervous about driving with gasoline serving as a rear-bumper, but when his host stated that the car was diesel, as was the stored fuel, Mark's concerns eased considerably.

After resting off and on during the day so they could drive at night, their host packed them food and drink after feeding them dinner. Mark and Penny changed their clothes and were soon ready to proceed.

With on-board fuel, food and drink, they would now only have to stop for bathroom breaks.

Their host also provided them with a low-tech solution for that, giving them a plastic-lined five-gallon bucket with a seat-lid combination, a roll of toilet paper, extra plastic bags, and a small shovel. As he joked they would have to find their own bushes to hide behind, he smiled at Penny.

Penny was not at all amused and looked at Mark, asking with her eyes, "Into what exactly are you getting us?"

The host recognized the look and reminded them that Peter relayed that it was important that they not be seen in typical public places if at all possible which would only leave crumbs for someone to follow and jeopardize their safety.

With the darkness falling upon them, Mark and Penny thanked another generous host and they went on their way.

Chapter Eleven

Penny drove the slower upper route from Boise to Afton, Wyoming through Idaho Falls.

When Peter first told Mark and Penny of the available secluded mountain retreat outside of Afton, Wyoming, he explained that its owner Jared Lockwood had been influenced by Ayn Rand's classic 1957 novel *Atlas Shrugged*.

When Mr. Lockwood travelled through Wyoming one trip as he was looking for vacation property several decades earlier, he came upon Afton and immediately thought of the fictitious Afton, Utah in the book. It was the town from where the heroine had flown before she later safely crashed in the mountains as she stumbled upon Galt's Gulch, a.k.a., 'Atlantis'.

Jared Lockwood found the area to his liking and soon arranged for the purchase of several hundred secluded acres and later built a large vacation retreat for his family.

Mark grabbed the book Peter had recently given him, *Atlas Shrugged*. Mark had first read the novel during his senior year of high school.

During college mid-terms as he was taking 23-credit hours in the sciences, he again read within two weeks the 1,168-page book. Many years later he yet read it a third time. Mark's copy had been destroyed in the resultant fire when his house had been exploded by a bomb.

Like countless others who read *Atlas Shrugged* over the decades since it was first published, the novel had profound influence on Mark, especially his early life. Nevertheless, he disagreed with its fundamental theme.

Figuring he needed to help keep Penny awake while she drove at night, Mark began sifting through the highlights he noted in the

novel he'd been reading again since he finished writing his own book the week before.

Evidently Mark didn't realize that he would be betting his life that a conversation over the book would not bore her to death, leading to his own death after she crashed.

"So what's with the book's title, '*Atlas Shrugged*'?" asked Penny, feigning interest.

"It stems from a conversation between an heir to a vast copper fortune, Francisco d'Anconia, and Hank Reardon, a self-made industrialist," Mark commented, as he took his pen-light and found the passage he tabbed.

"The conversation was, 'If you saw Atlas, the giant who holds the world on his shoulders, if you saw that he stood, blood running down his chest, his knees buckling, his arms trembling but still trying to hold the world aloft with the last of his strength, and the greater his effort the heavier the world bore down upon his shoulders—what would you tell him?'"

"Reardon's comment was, 'I...don't know. What...could he do? What would you tell him?'"

"To which d'Anconia responded, 'To shrug'."

"Wouldn't it have made some sense to first check out the cause of the burden, before telling Atlas to shrug and just give up?" asked Penny.

"That sure didn't take you long. You hit the nail on the head, why I had problems with the book," replied Mark. "My personal quest for the past two decades has been precisely to figure out those real-life problems so a direct cure could instead be applied.

"Rand and her characters sadly seem quite content to accept the status quo as either unchallengeable or unchangeable, at least short of utter collapse.

“She certainly argues well that government *shouldn’t* behave as it does, but she never seems to ask ‘how’ they pull it off, which is what I have sought.”

“So tell me about the story line,” said Penny, ever the glutton for punishment, knowing it was going to be a long drive anyway.

“In the beginning of Rand’s novel, various individuals are introduced who have assumed the figurative role of Atlas in their pursuit of productive endeavors.

“One-by-one, however, these producers begin to understand corrupt forces in the world which stripped them of their just rewards while improperly punishing them for their very successes.

“Francisco d’Anconia explained it as follows:

“I saw the government regulations passed to cripple me, because I was successful, and to help my competitors, because they were loafing failures...and I saw that the harder I worked, the more I tightened the noose around my throat’.

“d’Anconia admitted that he ‘saw no way to fight it.’ He revealed, however, that ‘John found the way’.

“Francisco d’Anconia relayed that John Galt ‘pointed at the skyscrapers of the city. He said that we had to extinguish the lights of the world, and when we would see the lights of New York go out, we would know that our job was done’.”

“One-by-one, the productive characters in the novel begin to shrug, ending their production.

“As readers learn from the protagonist John Galt, he and his followers, the ‘men of the mind’, went ‘on strike’.

“As Galt tells it, they went on strike ‘against martyrdom—and against the moral code which demands it. We are on strike against those who believe that one man must exist for the sake of another.

We are on strike against the morality of cannibals, be it practiced in body or in spirit’.

“Their method of strike was simply to cease ‘breaking that moral code’.

“Galt’s goal was to blast that moral code ‘out of existence forever by the one method that it can’t withstand: by obeying it’. He stated ‘We are obeying it. We are complying...We have withdrawn the works of our minds from society’.

“Galt further related that: ‘I quit your world. I made it my job to warn your victims and give them the method and the weapons to fight you. The method was to refuse to deflect retribution. The weapon was justice’.

“Rand repeatedly relays why various characters quit society. For example, Dr. Hendricks reported that: ‘I quit when medicine was placed under State control’.

“Another man, Ellis Wyatt, an oil producer, stated: ‘I quit...because I didn’t wish to serve as the cannibals’ meal and to do the cooking, besides’.

“Galt relayed that those who quit their chosen professions who yet needed income would then ‘take nothing but the lowliest jobs and we produce, by the effort of our muscles, no more than we consume for our immediate needs’, as they continued their chosen pursuits only privately,” said Mark.

“There sure seems to be a whole lot of quitting going on in that book. Tell me why this book is yet so popular, even a half-century after it was first published,” commented Penny.

“Well, Ayn Rand did a good job showing *why* government as practiced was so damaging. That was at least a step in the right direction. The characters were generally quite likeable. Many were people one would like to meet in real life.

“Two of Rand’s characters, Dagny Taggart and Hank Reardon, resist quitting the longest. In a conversation with her life-long friend Francisco d’Anconia, the railroad heiress Taggart relayed:

“It seems monstrously wrong to surrender the world to the looters, and monstrously wrong to live under their rule. I can neither give up nor go back. I can neither exist without work nor work as a serf. I had always thought that any sort of battle was proper, anything, except renunciation. I’m not sure we’re right to quit, you and I, when we should have fought them. But there is no way to fight. It’s surrender, if we leave — and surrender, if we remain. I don’t know what is right any longer’.

“I understand the heroine’s resistance to surrender or live under the looter’s invalid rule, but I certainly challenge her defeatist assertion that ‘there is no way to fight’.

“Rand’s character Francisco replies to Dagny regarding their childhood goals, helping show his view of unique form of protest, why he quit:

“‘We can afford to give them up, for a short while, in order to redeem something much more precious...You’re beginning to see, aren’t you? Dagny! Leave them the carcass of that railroad, leave them all the rusted rails and rotted ties and gutted engines—but don’t leave them your mind’.

“As the novel progresses and things worsen for Dagny who hasn’t yet quit, Taggart finds herself fighting a losing battle to save her railroad which once helped distribute the lifeblood of the country.

“Hank Reardon also held out for an extended period of time. Francisco d’Anconia argued that Reardon continuing to work only enriched their destroyers, not themselves, however, stating:

“‘You take pride in setting no limit to your endurance, Mr. Reardon, because you think that you are doing right. What if you aren’t? What if you’re placing your virtue in the service of

evil and letting it become a tool for the destruction of everything you love, respect, and admire’?

“With my work, I understand the importance of not supporting freedom’s adversaries, and I don’t have any problem accepting lowly positions to better ensure it.

“But my overriding goal has remained to study how those who used government as a weapon to disarm their victims acted with apparent disregard of the limitations imposed on government by the Constitution.

“Galt informs listeners to his radio address that:

“‘I was an inventor...An inventor is a man who asks ‘Why?’ of the universe and lets nothing stand between the answer and his mind’.

“Galt’s statement was *why* I had difficulty accepting him giving up so quickly and resorting to an end-game plan of destruction.

“One of the clues offering insight into Rand’s thoughts on her characters’ preferred course of action to quit society is offered on the last page of the book, where Miss Rand informs readers of one of her minor character’s final activities.

“Rand writes, referring to Judge Narragansett:

“‘He sat at a table, and the light of his lamp fell on the copy of an ancient document. He had marked and crossed out the contradictions in its statements that had once been the cause of its destruction. He was now adding a new clause to its pages: ‘Congress shall make no law abridging the freedom of production and trade’.

“Though Rand was perhaps an extraordinary philosopher, it became apparent to me that she was not as well-versed in the U.S. Constitution as she should have been, given her work.

“Rand points to a new clause for ‘*freedom of production and trade*’ as an answer to America’s downfall, while asserting that

downfall was caused by inherent ‘contradictions’ within ‘ancient documents’.

“I find it incredible that Rand makes such an assertion without showing the explicit inconsistencies which supposedly caused America’s downfall.

“Perhaps Rand’s followers would argue that her whole book showed those contradictions, which resulted in part from the resting of individual rights as gifts from our Creator, as she railed against earlier within the novel.

“But before getting to that argument, Rand’s invalid assertion that the Constitution as enacted empowered Congress to restrict production should first be addressed.

“Article I, Section 8, Clause 3, of course, empowers Congress ‘to regulate Commerce with foreign Nations, and among the several States, and with the Indian Tribes’.

“To ‘regulate commerce’ is to make trade regular, consistent — as opposed to irregular, inconsistent, or arbitrary. With regards to the States, it was primarily meant to prevent them from erecting trade barriers between one another, to ensure a free flow of goods across State borders.

“Article I, Section 9, Clause 6 better clarifies that meaning as such.

“Clause 3 also made trade with foreign nations and the Indian tribes regular and consistent.

“The power ‘to regulate commerce’ however, does not extend to regulate businesses engaged in commerce — to regulate businesses engaged in trade. The difference is both critical and fundamental.

“Production is a matter outside of normal federal authority, within the reserved authority of the States; except, of course, on exclusive legislative jurisdiction properties.

“Since the Constitution grants Congress only enumerated powers, together with necessary and proper means to carry out those explicit powers, Congress need not be explicitly prohibited from regulating production to cause such effect, as Rand mis-implies.

“It is actually a dangerous road to traverse to expressly prohibit general powers not granted, such as Rand’s proposes. That road improperly supports a concept of a Congress of *inherent* powers, except as they are explicitly prohibited. I should mention that Article I, Section 9 contains but specific exceptions *to general powers elsewhere granted*, so that section is not improper.

“The Constitution as originally ratified contained no Bill of Rights exactly for such reason. Nevertheless, the States demanded the Bill of Rights as further declaratory and restrictive clauses added to prevent misconstruction or abuse of government power.

“That the Bill of Rights was ratified now unfortunately leads others such as Rand to falsely believe that additional negative restrictions must be placed to restrict government only to its delegated authority.

Each new restriction would thereby add further support to the false contention that government holds all remaining powers not expressly prohibited. The 10th Amendment was specifically inserted to counter such an argument which now held greater validity without

“That the accepted meaning of Clause 3 today is contrary to its historical meaning doesn’t mean the original words need changing.

“What the accepted meaning does show is how essential it is to learn ‘How’ the historical meaning appeared to change over time.

“I should mention that members of Congress are empowered to regulate trade by express authority, but I would argue that such power is proper. At the minimum, Congress *should* restrict trade with one’s enemies and all countries allied with that enemy during a period of declared war.

“If Congress had no express power to restrict foreign trade, I would argue they could neither do so in time of war.

“Thus, simply to extend their chance for additional profits, American businessmen could give the enemy treasonous aid and comfort.

“This unjust scenario would not only put America’s military men and women and perhaps the general population directly in harm’s way, but also jeopardize every founding principle of America herself as her citizens supplied her own enemies with the resources to cause her destruction.

“Any country which willingly sacrifices fundamental principles to temporary profits will soon have neither, as the country soon finds itself wiped from the face of the earth.

“Dealing with foreign countries was among the pre-eminent reasons for establishing the federal government in the first place. Preventing foreign trade treaties would eliminate much of the reason for its existence, and such efforts would soon cause that effect.

“America’s early laws regulating foreign trade contained few or none of issues to which Rand would later object and explicitly sought to open up trade amongst foreign nations; I would therefore oppose changing the Constitution in either manner which Rand recommended as essential.

“I think her points only show the critical need to understand ‘How’ the clause was seemingly subverted.

“Long before I discovered the answers which ultimately verified my hypothesis, my role was to question claimed authority which contradicted historical tradition.

“For example, I centered my work on ‘How’ did government do what it did, given the Declaration of Independence and Constitution? And ‘How’ exactly had such clearly-inappropriate actions nevertheless been successful to date?

“My methodology became ‘Follow the Money’ and ‘Question (false) Authority’.

“I did not take the self-appointed authoritarians’ claims of omnipotence as it readily appears did Miss Rand and her characters. Instead, I let ‘nothing stand between the answer and my mind’, as I relentlessly sought to understand ‘How’ falsely-claimed government authority which contradicted historical usage continued to exist.

“For example, I agree with copper heir Francisco d’Anconia when he stated:

“‘Whenever destroyers appear among men, they start by destroying money, for money is men’s protection and the base of a moral existence. Destroyers seize gold and leave to its owners a counterfeit pile of paper. This kills all objective standards and delivers men into the arbitrary power of an arbitrary setter of values. Gold was an objective value, an equivalent of wealth produced. Paper is a mortgage on wealth that does not exist, backed by a gun aimed at those who are expected to produce it’.

“Rand writes of Judge Narragansett, that he was ‘the kind of figure that had vanished from the courtrooms of the county when the gold coins had vanished from the country’s hands’.

“Rand also has Dagny Taggart admitting that the gold minted by the private Mulligan Bank at Galt’s Gulch ‘had not been in circulation since the days of Nat Taggart’.

“From such passages, it is apparent that Rand correctly understood both the harmful consequences of paper currencies and the restriction of gold, as well as the time when such destructive practices would likely occur, at the beginning of the destroyer’s initial efforts.

“Such clues should have narrowed the window of time for Rand to investigate, to 1862 when real-life legal tender paper currencies were first implemented and 1933 when gold was first ‘prohibited’.

“Nevertheless, none of her characters investigated these watershed moments where America was severed from her strict constitutional moorings.

“Rand ends her book with John Galt tracing in space ‘the sign of the dollar’. Earlier she stated that the sign of the dollar was their ‘symbol’, their ‘sign’ of ‘free trade and free minds’ by which they were to ‘move to reclaim this county’.

“Rand properly places honest money in its proper pivotal role at the center of freedom moored on ‘free trade and free minds’, but nevertheless tragically fails to carry out her own moral imperatives.

“For example, the philosopher-character Hugh Akston states within the novel: ‘We never make assertions, Miss Taggart...That is the moral crime peculiar to our enemies. We do not tell—we *show*. We do not claim—we *prove*’.

“Yet, Francisco d’Anconia states to Hank Reardon:

“Those pieces of papers, which should have been gold, are a token of honor—your claim upon the energy of men who produce’.

“Should have been gold’ sounds like an assertion to me, an assertion contrary to the current state of typical affairs which Rand and her characters readily accepted as beyond their powers to change, at least short of total destruction of society.

“Instead of making assertions, I *showed*, I *proved*, in *Monetary Laws of the United States*, ‘How’ and ‘Why’ gold and silver were yet the only tenders in the payment of debts in the United States of America.

“I further *showed* and *proved* ‘How’ and ‘Why’ paper currencies were foreign to that jurisdiction, ‘How’ and ‘Why’ they were only legal tender for the district constituting the government of the United States, as an explicit exception to the rule which was the Constitution.

“I also *showed* and *proved* ‘How’ and ‘Why’ gold ‘confiscation’ was only but a margin call on bank shareholders who had voluntarily entered into agreements with the government to send gold to the Federal Reserve banks and ultimately the Treasury for backing their issuance of bank notes.

“We supported ourselves in small businesses or low-paying jobs as I continued my decades-long work to reclaim honest money and limited government under the Constitution, as I exposed arbitrary government action to be but clever deception by re-definition.

“Rand’s characters instead concentrated on destroying production and removing producers from the equation, to bring America to her knees and back to dust, in hopes they could then rebuild.

“Terrorists also seek to bring America to her knees by destroying productive facilities and also take over, though for different ends.

“Although the end purposes for which Rand’s characters and terrorists act stand diametrically opposed to one another, their means to those divergent ends remain identical.

“Implementing the same actions as America’s sworn enemies even for different reasons is fraught with danger which could easily backfire.

“Rand protested government’s improper and invalid actions, but tragically accepted them at face value as none of her characters ever directly confronted any invalid action of government.

“Neither Rand nor her heroes or heroines ever challenged the destroyer’s power to start destroying money, their power to seize gold, their power to leave its owners with counterfeit piles of paper, or to enact arbitrary dictates far beyond the scope and spirit of the Constitution.

“Rand and her heroes and heroines only asserted it was improper and gave reasons ‘Why’ it shouldn’t be done, but never concentrated on ‘How’ it was done, so it could be directly ‘un-done’.

“Rand concentrated on the ‘Why’, but tragically never on the ‘How’.

“Part of Rand’s mistake was likely her disagreement to the Declaration of Independence’s insistence that man’s unalienable rights are endowed by our Creator.

“Rand has Galt saying in his ‘This is John Galt Speaking’ speech:

“‘You who’ve lost the concept of a right, you who swing an impotent evasiveness between the claim that rights are a gift of God, a supernatural gift to be taken on faith, or the claim that rights are a gift of society, to be broken by its arbitrary whim...*Rights* are (actually) conditions of existence required by man’s nature for his proper survival’.

“Our founding fathers rightfully placed man’s rights off-limits to any government of men by clearly stating that our rights are gifts from the Creator upon which no earthly government may morally interfere.

“As ‘all men are created equal’, no man holds any special power over another as God’s emissary on earth. Thus America’s founders best protected man’s unalienable rights from *all* earthly powers.

“Any government which interfered with man’s unalienable rights was thus immoral by default as its actions were invalid in nature.

“Rand, by asserting that man’s rights are mere ‘conditions of existence required by man’s nature for his proper survival’, however, provides no inherent protection mechanisms whatsoever against any government of men, or group of thugs, neither of which may care of ‘conditions’ or even any man’s ‘survival’.

“Rand has Galt stating that:

“A mystic is a man who surrendered his mind at its first encounter with the minds of others. Somewhere in the distant reaches of his childhood, when his own understanding of reality clashed with the assertions of others, with their arbitrary orders and contradictory demands, he gave in to so craven a fear of independence that he renounced his rational faculty. At the crossroads of the choice between ‘I know’ and ‘They say’, he chose the authority of others, he chose to submit rather than to understand, to *believe* rather than to think. Faith in the supernatural begins as faith in the superiority of others. His surrender took the form of the feeling that he must hide his lack of understanding, that others possess some mysterious knowledge of which he alone is deprived, that reality is whatever they want it to be, through some means forever denied to him’.

“Galt, as Rand, however, nevertheless falls into that very trap when they tragically failed to uphold their own ‘understanding of reality’, against ‘arbitrary orders and contradictory demands’ of a government which they argued against but otherwise nevertheless tragically accepted.

“There was no evidence anywhere throughout the lengthy book that showed that Galt and his men ever challenged the government’s omnipotence beyond mere theoretical opposition. Never once did they look into the actual manner of ‘How’ government acted the way it did, they only argued ‘Why’ it shouldn’t act that way.

“‘Why’ not backed up by ‘How’ proves the first impotent.

“Rather, Rand merely seeks to deprive the looters’ state of ‘the best of its slaves’, while her heroes tragically helped destroy America’s productive capacity.

“I would not argue that one’s enemies should be allowed to feast upon society continuously, but I hardly agree that destroying society is the best first strategy.

“The question is why then, did Rand in her novel so willingly concede America to the looters in the first place? Why didn’t she challenge their authority and expose their improper mode of action as a giant fraud as I have done in *Monetary Laws of the United States*?

“I would argue that Rand likely searched to the extent of her reason, and, failing to find any answer, gave up and began implementing her favored plan of destruction.

“In other words, at an early roadblock, she punted and gave up. She quit, like her characters.

“I would argue that Rand had insufficient faith to keep up the fight when her reason failed her and thus gave up far too early.

“I would never argue that Rand’s reasoning powers didn’t far surpass my own. Where she was a world-class philosopher, I am but a stubborn, ornery mule who absolutely refused to believe that America could be so easily sidetracked by any just course of action.

“While I would not argue that I didn’t ultimately use reason to solve my quest, I would nevertheless argue that my faith kept me going in the right direction until my power of reason could finally prove me right in the end.

“The only thing left to the atheist Rand after she reached the limits of her reason was destruction; because it was better to destroy society than live as a slave, because she had no faith and without faith she was without hope and without hope she was doomed to destruction, both in life on this earth and the hereafter which concerned her none in the least.

“I would argue it is best, however, to fight as a free man under the watchful eye of a loving God and destroy the destroyers by understanding their motive power, which turned out to be but simple case of deception carried out rather skillfully.

“I showed that truth converts omnipotent American government to impotence on any and all matters beyond strict construction of the

Constitution, other than as originally excepted, except for the district constituting the seat of government.

“America was diverted from her rightful role as the bright Beacon of Liberty in a world all too full of darkness and despair by masters of deception who must stand naked before all of America once the correct curtain is pulled back.

“America’s glory can be restored by the actions of any persistent pooch that faithfully trusts its instinctive nose and doesn’t quit or give up until the proper curtain is pulled back.

“Dogs haven’t any reason, but that doesn’t yet prevent them from doing the right thing, as long as they simply continue to sniff out all that smells amiss.

“The larger the stench, the more one *knows* there *must* be something to find. One must only be persistent *and absolutely refuse to give up. Never quit.* Tragically, reason — or, more accurately, insufficient reason — simply gets in the way.

“Helping share the burden of Atlas until continued sniffing turns up the knife being twisted in his back proved to be a reasonable quest. With a little help from his friends, *Atlas Persisted*, and his attackers were soon identified and summarily eliminated.

“Thereafter *Atlas Prospered* and the American Dream blossomed, *without universal destruction.* Only the destroyers were destroyed, as justice demands.

“True justice does not first demand that victims must also be massacred along with the unjust victors. Justice demands discrimination between the invalid victors and innocent victims to the extent possible.

“Rand’s efforts only led to indiscriminate slaughter, though she may have argued that few were innocent.”

Chapter Twelve

The Afton ranch was at the south end of the valley, up in the low foothills on a natural bench, offering panoramic views while remaining secluded. The nearest neighbor was several miles away.

There was an irrigation pond out back with a dock and a rope swing, both of which would undoubtedly see great use over the hot summer.

A gently-rolling field was cleared for pasture and fenced, with an adjacent horse barn. There was an area for a large garden near a garden shed. Another nearby shed could be easily used as a chicken coop.

Although the facilities had been set up with long-term, self-sufficient living in mind, it had only been used as an intermittent vacation home to date.

Peter Dennison had made sure the pantry shelves had been stocked overflowing with basic foodstuffs and the large propane tank for cooking and backup heat was filled. The diesel tank for the generator and vehicles was full. Solar cells charging marine batteries were on one section of the roof. There was a windmill which kept the elevated water tank full from the well.

Besides the main house with two master suites, there was also a caretaker's cottage, machinery shop, woodshop and storage shed.

Mark and Penny took the caretaker's cottage, since the other parents needed to be near their small children.

The facilities were superb and they were all very thankful for such beautiful surroundings. The Evanston crew could easily spend the rest of their days at the luxurious Afton ranch.

Mark found the hidden safe which was well-stocked with currency and junk silver for them. Peter had liquidated Chester Adamson's gold coins which had proved well-preserved and quite

rare. The proceeds would easily cover many years of expenses for the whole group.

At first Mark objected to the proceeds, saying that Chester's gold coins belonged to his whole family.

Peter pointed out that distributing those proceeds throughout his family would draw attention not only to his family, but also Floyd and Jennifer Tomkins.

Peter then refreshed Mark's memory with his prior dealings with the current owners of Chester's house.

When Mark had signed his contract with the Tomkins giving up the Evanston's claim to any discovered gold, silver or currency, he not only signed it individually, but also with his father's power of attorney.

As his father was the rightful heir to that gold, the Evanston's claim to that gold terminated with Mark's signature, since Mark legally spoke for his father who suffered with Alzheimer's.

Thus the discovered gold belonged solely to the Tomkins at the time it was actually found. Floyd Tomkins then gave up his claim on the gold so Mark could continue his research.

Jennifer later gave up her claim to the gold also to Mark, to maintain her privacy and best protect the Tomkins from potential harm.

Thus, by Mark's original arrangement and the turn of events, it was no longer Chester Adamson's gold, or Vincent Evanston's, but now Mark's.

Peter pointed out that Mark did not attempt to gain unto himself Chester's gold in an unrighteous manner, but to access the information for which Chester paid with his life. That Chester's gold came back to Mark in the end was just how things ended up taking care of themselves.

Besides, Peter argued, undoubtedly Chester would have wanted that gold to help ensure that his research finally saw the light of day so his death would not be in vain.

He would undoubtedly want that gold to help protect the person who brought it forward, so that person wouldn't be killed as was Chester. That this person would turn out to be his great-great-great-great-grandson was just icing on the cake.

Mark could not argue with Peter's sound reasoning or his conclusions; thus he gave up the attempt and thanked God for providing their means while Mark continued to pursue His ends.

Although the ranch offered a myriad of possibilities for keeping them busy, Mark was still concerned the other adults would inevitably develop cabin fever as the days turned to weeks which turned into months and maybe even years.

He didn't think it was wise for any of them to go much into town, especially after his information hit the internet and papers in two more weeks. Mark would avoid town altogether.

Bethany and Daphne took up Penny's suggestion that they all plant a large garden and teach the kids to tend to it as they provided food for themselves.

Blake wanted to raise some chickens, pigs, a few head of beef and a milk cow. A few sheep and goats could help keep the outlying grass in check. Horses would provide hours of enjoyment and redundant transportation if needed.

The April days were pleasant even as the nights were yet rather cool.

Blake made a few trips to several nearby towns to get gardening supplies for the ladies and materials needed for the animals, not wanting to shop too much locally. He figured it was a delicate balance that he needed to monitor, local trips mainly for ordinary items and groceries.

Blake powered up the small tractor which had been stored in the shop and tilled the ground for the garden. He looked through the gardening shed and found hoes, shovels, loppers, a wheelbarrow and related tools.

The tools suffered from a little neglect and needed a little tender loving care; he applied a little elbow grease with a wire brush to some of the developing rust spots. Then he sharpened the cutting edges with a file and smeared a touch of oil over the metal.

The garden was soon tilled and ready for planting.

Penny decided that May 1st would be a good day for everyone to plant the garden, to help denote the day with additional significance. The garden area was all staked and a sketch of the crops to be planted was in hand. The seeds were in boxes or packages and sprinklers on standby.

With his work prepping the garden finished, Blake set about getting ready for the animals. He set some metal stakes and put up chicken wire off his new chicken coop. He readied an area for the piglets and checked the pasture fence for the cows and horses. He got the automatic water troughs set up and working.

Once he was ready for the animals, he hooked up a trailer from the machinery shed to run get them, taking several trips to a number of different farms.

Besides dehydrated and canned milk and dried eggs and other stored food, they soon enjoyed farm fresh eggs and milk. The young boys enjoyed their first ten minutes of trying to milk a cow, and churning butter and ice cream. They enjoyed much longer feeding the young steer which came along with the milk cow.

The group had been using their new names since they got to Wyoming. It definitely took some getting used to. With practice, it was getting easier.

Blake began growing a beard, and no longer shaved his head. Blake's premature balding really stood out once his hair began growing out around the periphery.

Mark also grew a beard and let his hair grow a little longer, while the ladies changed their hair color and style of cut.

Blake and Mark knew that nothing happens in a small town without everyone knowing about it, but thought that it still offered them more privacy than getting lost in a big city that was extensively wired with snooping surveillance cameras.

In other words, when push came to shove, Mark and Blake trusted small-town county folk over privacy-busting biometric facial recognition technology.

Blake picked up materials for woodworking projects in the shop. Besides caring for the garden and the animals, Blake set his mind to teaching the older kids various woodworking skills by hand so they could make personal mementoes and Christmas or birthday presents for extended family members.

While others got dirt under their fingernails and slivers in their hands, Mark set about his work on his third book. Whereas the first book had looked at the present, the second to the past, the third would look to the future.

His strategy was to write his thoughts about how to best get from where America was at present to where she ought to be in the future. It was his suggested roadmap for returning America to her rightful glory.

Mark knew that his days over the coming months would be consumed with his work. Not knowing how long their cover could be maintained, he knew it was important to proceed full speed ahead.

April was winding down; the May 1st launch of Sarah's story and posting online Mark's recent book was right around the corner.

Sarah was very pleased with how her story developed. At first she was worried that she would need another few pages to adequately tell the story. She knew though that she needed to keep it concise because she didn't have sufficient time to make it any longer.

With judicious editing, Sarah made sure her story fit within four pages, with room for photos dealing with Chester's research. Her editor's personal typesetting and arrangement of the pages would determine the final layout.

Peter was ready to go with the modifications to Mark's website, as well as a few websites of his own.

At 12:01 am on May 1st, Peter's colleagues posted Mark's book and Chester's research documents online. Thousands of emails went out and press releases were sent to the television news networks, radio stations, and newspaper news desks across the nation.

By 1:00 am, The *Washington Sentinel's* printers were busy printing up the morning's edition and finished two hours later.

Sarah's special four-page edition wrapped the outside of the paper, ensuring it maximum visibility. The headline of the Special Edition screamed "*Devious Civil War Plot Exposed.*"

The edition had a number of photographs. Dug from The *Sentinel's* archives were pictures of slavery abolitionist Payton Phillips, Chester Adamson's burned 1871 shell of a house and third Bank of the United States proponent Charles Cunningham III.

Pictured in the article were the front pages of the death-bed affidavits of Phillips, Dempsey, and Radcliff, though they were too small to read. Dempsey's monogrammed satchel was also prominently pictured on the front page.

The March 22, 1849, New York hotel registry and a photograph of Fort Sumter rounded out the photographs.

Sarah's article laid out Chester's information and masterfully pulled it altogether. And no one saw the story coming. Not a single person alive outside of Mark's designated group, not even Charles Cunningham VII, ever knew the story beforehand.

The impact was thus greater than any domestic disaster the United States had ever seen. It was a Pearl Harbor attack on the reigning political structure improperly built over proper constitutional government.

Like a virus, government operating far beyond the spirit of the Constitution had spread far and wide. Overnight its moral authority evaporated. It was as if immoral government had its own blood supply but now that nutrient flow was abruptly and forever severed at the root.

Immoral government would shrivel, leaving moral government rightfully standing in its place.

Sarah Jacobs, Janet Davidson and Steve Fredrickson called for a press conference at the front steps of The *Washington Sentinel* at 10:00 am. News correspondents from around the region converged at the site, staging their satellite vans nearby and setting up their microphones.

There was no evidence at the scene of a dearth of news correspondents from hollowed-out news budgets slashed in the internet age and narrow profit margins resulting from depreciating paper currencies and excessive government regulations.

Sarah went first to introduce the subject, giving comments on her breaking story and answering questions.

Janet Davidson went next, putting everything in context and explaining the implications in simple terms.

Steve Fredrickson went last. His call went out to law enforcement agencies throughout the land, reminding them and every other government official that they all swore an oath to support

the Constitution, not their superiors, not their colleagues, not their own jobs, nor even government by any means.

Steve argued that following the letter of the Constitution should never violate its spirit. All clauses of the Constitution must be followed, not just one.

One clause primarily providing an exception for a 64,000-acre geographically-confined area of land does not over-ride the vast remainder of constitutional clauses meant for the remaining 2.3 billion acres of land mass.

Steve challenged law enforcement personnel to learn about that exception as they again studied the rule which was and is the Constitution.

At 11:30 am, the press conference ended and the three went inside.

Political commentators from beyond the region continued calling the paper's office to attempt to speak with Sarah or anyone else with answers, jamming the paper's many phone lines and taxing all the additional receptionists who had been brought in to help deal with the inevitable onslaught.

Whereas Sarah's first article on Mark and his research some 18 months before had created a small stir, her latest article blew things completely out of the ballpark.

Those people who had difficulty accepting the implications of her first story often stated that they just could not see how such a caper could have been pulled off.

The original story just seemed too preposterous to believe without a credible story detailing how such events could possibly have come to pass.

Since people could discount what they couldn't believe, large numbers of Americans had maintained the status quo.

Now, however, the cold, harsh methods which pushed the country away from her strict constitutional moorings were exposed for the whole world to see.

The compelling evidence followed logic and was fully plausible to create the events which followed.

No longer could Americans simply stick their heads in the sand and act as if the whole thing was a bad dream.

Just like ‘rubber-neckers’ on the freeway who strain the hardest to look at the worst of accidents, so too did Americans everywhere now look at the most horrendous of heinous political maneuverings ever exposed.

Gone from people’s eyes was the innocence of believing honest government any longer existed in these United States; a government that protected the weak from the strong, a government of law and not of men.

American government as practiced for 150 years had finally been exposed as a corrupt, incorrigible system which used graft to protect the powerful over the weak. The most virulent of viruses had overtaken a far too-trusting of host.

Since Sarah’s story completely blindsided everyone on all sides of the table, no one anywhere was prepared to deal with the fallout, making the story virtually impossible to manage.

By the time proponents of the status quo could assemble together, discuss the ramifications, and try to plan for alternatives, there was simply no way to undo the irreparable damage which had already been done to their credibility.

The story caught even the most politically-connected completely off-guard and thus not even they could come up with a proper strategy to mitigate the damage.

People who always had answers now had none to offer.

Without immediate and proper damage-control, the damage was quick and extensive.

Sensing impending danger, millions of people called in sick on Thursday; tens of millions did not even bother to make the call, as nobody was there to answer the calls anyway.

Instead, one spouse went to the bank and emptied their accounts while the other went to the grocery stores to max out their credit cards while they still worked, as shelves were quickly stripped bare.

News reporters began relaying government pleas for people not to panic.

The President of the United States made several short broadcasts urging Americans to attend to their jobs so needed products could be made and delivered to stores which could then be replenished.

Television and radio stations repeated the President's messages every hour to try and help calm the public.

These messages from once-trusted sources now caused their opposite effect. After hearing the President's plea for people to stay at work, people knew now exactly what they should do — the opposite — that they should take the day off to better protect themselves.

Gun shops were sold out of their guns and ammunition well before noon, not that they had much beginning stock.

Coin shops were depleted of their gold and silver coin.

Reports of rapidly escalating prices were abundant, as storeowners responded to the increased demand and limited supply with high prices.

Many small business owners with steel cages on their storefronts simply barricaded their doors and stood guard inside protecting their inventory with shotguns, to prevent looting and hysteria, knowing their inventories would be more valuable than the currency which they would accept in its place.

Lines at gas stations reminiscent of the 1970's reappeared, as people filled their vehicles and gas cans until the station's fuel tanks were emptied. Those left in line without fuel began smashing the station's windows and hitting the fuel pumps with trash cans or whatever else was handy.

A few creative owners of critical businesses found it necessary to bribe their employees with special bonuses such as ten-to-one paid vacation days scheduled at least a month away in hopes key employees would remain at work those first few critical days.

Bars and taverns began filling up much earlier in the day than usual for a weekday. The crowds were rambunctious and quarrelsome, mad that no one discovered the corrupt events long before to save the country 150 years of unnecessary heartache, devastation and death.

Prisons and jails soon went on riot alert as a result of the obvious double standard. Prisoners who committed petty crimes against property or person but were sentenced to multi-year prison terms understandably became upset that the financiers who surreptitiously drained billions of dollars from society or instigated deadly wars lived in lavish mansions in posh neighborhoods and top-floor penthouses in the world's richest cities.

Newspapers throughout the land ordered their best investigative reporters to check into Sarah's story and tear it apart to see what they could find, ordering them to follow the information wherever it lead.

Major book publishers commissioned their best historians to drop everything else they were doing and begin researching Chester Adamson's story and all the related tangents. A number of publishers published Mark's books since they were in the public domain.

Sarah, Janet and Steve were booked independently with back-to-back televised speaking engagements, talk show events, and interviews.

Janet brought in her closest team members she had developed over the past year and promoted them to give interviews on their own once they read Mark's recent book and Sarah's story.

Steve Fredrickson's brother Randy had been hired away from the Secret Service. His last day had been April 30th. He hit the ground running May 1st.

Coming on board as additional security in two more weeks were several of Steve's friends from the Marshal's Service. In another few weeks there would be several more recruits from the Secret Service.

In the meantime, the Department of Treasury asked for volunteers from its enforcement agencies to help protect Janet, even though she was no longer an employee. Over fifty agents volunteered to work in around-the-clock shifts to protect one of their former bosses, the one who now worked reclaiming liberty and justice once and for all in the Land of the Free and Home of the Brave.

The *Sentinel* provided several ex-military bodyguards for Sarah, even though she didn't like the idea of being baby-sat but nevertheless welcomed the additional peace of mind.

At Peter's disposal were a number of ex-military members who offered their Special Forces training. Two took turns watching over Mark's extended family in Vancouver, and another two rotated watching over Penny's extended family in Battle Ground.

The bodyguards delivered the store of supplies Mark had arranged for family members, since they hadn't been warned ahead of time to take extra precautions. It was safer to just provide the supplies after the story broke than have even more people who weren't directly involved in breaking the story know more than they really needed at the time.

Thursday and Friday proved to be the most hectic. The calm which usually accompanies a weekend brought a measured reprieve from the prior days' events. The weekend allowed a chance for

ruffled and worried feathers to calm down, just as some of the more worried began making longer-term preparations.

By Monday, people had accomplished many of the short-term preparations as could be expected and the number of the people absent from work was less than the previous work days.

The sad reality is that people couldn't run from the coming storm which hit everywhere simultaneously. After all, it wasn't a localized weather pattern which would affect only one part of the nation, where people could flee to some other area.

People in the cities nevertheless knew they were the most vulnerable should the economy and government support structure continue to fail. Thus, those with family or close friends who lived in rural communities began making arrangements to leave the city, should things come to that.

Those most concerned in the cities wisely left immediately.

Those people in the suburbs welcomed their friends and family from the cities who had their own supplies, understanding there was greater safety in numbers.

Most people found security in their home. Being out on the road with scads of strangers offered neither comfort nor security. Traveling at night was avoided at all cost. Hotels were booked early and were at capacity, with even multiple families sometimes sharing scarce rooms.

While portions of Sarah's story were repeated in papers nationwide on Friday and weekend editions, by Monday original follow-up stories began appearing nationwide.

Experts were consulted to provide insights, but few dared to speculate much on the potential impact of the information.

Sarah was initially torn between continued in-depth newspaper reporting versus new opportunities to reach wider audiences with superficial television reporting and interviews.

She performed several interviews and gave additional special reports on television, but quickly realized that she liked the hard-hitting stories best covered by investigative newspaper and online reporting.

She began to outline a book covering her experiences.

While Sarah provided another hard-hitting front-page story in Wednesday's edition, a colleague wrote a lighter-reading story which concentrated on a few "what-if" historical scenarios.

For example, what if Charles Cunningham III's plot had been exposed before the South fired on Fort Sumter?

Or, what if President Washington had not followed Alexander Hamilton's advice and didn't sign his name incorporating the first Bank of the United States in the first place?

Or, what if Article I, Section 8, Clause 17 of the U.S. Constitution had never been ratified, which gave Hamilton the means necessary to prove to President Washington that Congress could there erect a national bank and which later would be used to divert the United States away from the spirit of the Constitution?

Or, what if some 80 soldiers hadn't mutinously marched in 1783 from Lancaster to join up with some 400 other soldiers stationed in Philadelphia to demand their past-due payments from the Second Continental Congress? This was the event which helped lead James Madison at the constitutional convention on August 18th to propose in the first place an exclusive-legislation federal seat where federal authorities could provide for their own protection.

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At 7:00 am on the morning of May 1st, a Salvation Army truck arrived at the Evanston apartment with a house key and boxes to take all the items therein back to the thrift store.

Neighbor Harold Hackett had been busy packing his belongings and notebooks when he heard commotion next door. He immediately went over to investigate.

Harold asked the man who seemed to be coordinating the packing efforts a multitude of questions, as would a nosy neighbor. The mover did not appreciate the 20 questions and said simply they were there to take everything to their thrift store.

Harold asked the mover when he had been told about picking up the items, and the gentleman responded that his boss told him about it the night before. The mover said he didn't really know anything about the matter. He stated that he just worked for the charity and was doing what he was told.

Seeing he wasn't going to get any more information with his current approach, Harold reached into his pocket and pulled out his badge. He informed the mover that he was F.B.I. Agent Gabe Rogers and ordered all activity to stop. He said a court order was already on its way to seize the belongings. Agent Rogers got the name and position of the mover's boss.

The startled movers left, not knowing anything yet about the breaking news back east.

Agent Rogers had been awake since 4:00 am when a senior F.B.I. official back east called him asking for an update on Mark Evanston.

Agent Rogers told him that nothing had changed since he last saw Mark and Penny Evanston April 13th when they returned home from church. He hadn't heard them leave that Sunday night, as Mark and Penny had left Penny's car around the block earlier in the day.

He relayed that when he realized their car was gone, that he followed the signal given off from the electronic tracking device he

had placed in Penny's car, but by the time he arrived at the car's parked location, that the car had already been vacated.

The senior official asked Agent Rogers if he had heard any news yet that morning. Agent Rogers admitted he had yet been sleeping, so no, he hadn't.

The official then informed Agent Rogers that *Washington Sentinel* reporter Sarah Jacobs broke a story that morning which provided an overview of Mark Evanston's latest book that was released into the public domain earlier that morning.

The Washington, D.C. official was not happy their six-month undercover operation with Agent Rogers watching over his neighbor produced no warning signs whatsoever that Mark Evanston was working on anything remotely of any consequence.

The senior official hoped that Agent Rogers' notes, data and recordings would now provide the evidence they could use to trace back a possible storyline of events.

With the end result now known, his superiors sought to make better sense of the beginning and middle. Thus Agent Rogers' help was being sought so he could help fill in the voids of knowledge which his digital recordings, photographs and videos could provide.

They didn't know what information they would find or what good it would do; they only knew they knew almost nothing of the matter. Thus they sought to pursue any information to try and discover a possible course of action to recommend further up the line.

Officials only knew Mark Evanston was the primary person of interest in the whole affair and thus sought his whereabouts for questioning.

The D.C.-based senior official ordered Agent Rogers to secure the Evanston belongings. As soon as his relief arrived with a warrant to seize the goods for shipment back east, he was to get on the first flight

east for debriefing. They had to know all that he knew regarding Mark Evanston.

When a half-dozen agents arrived with the court order, moving truck and boxes, Agent Rogers gave the senior agent the name and position of the Salvation Army official who had directed the crew to come out to pick up everything.

With those things done, Agent Rogers grabbed his things and drove back to the local office and dropped off his car. He was quickly taken to the airport for his flight to Washington, D.C.

Chapter Thirteen

The local weekly Afton newspaper came out on Wednesday and contained a front page article condensing Sarah Jacob's article from the previous Thursday.

The townsfolk had been talking about the story since it broke the week before on television, radio and on the internet.

Because of their isolation, no one in town really did much of anything any different than before the story broke. They were mostly rugged individualists who were always quite self-sufficient, who always kept a store of necessary supplies, even if many were often short of ready cash.

Their modern meat lockers were their deep freezes which were stocked with game and beef. Their pantries were all getting low of canned fruit and vegetables, but they would soon be restocked in due course during summer and fall harvest seasons. The fall hunting season would restock their freezers.

Throughout rural, small-town America, the scenario played out much the same. There was no panic, only a sigh of relief that a long-misunderstood battle was finally beginning to make rational sense. The doors of understanding were finally ajar and information was quickly filling in a long-misunderstood chasm.

Knowledge and information proved to be powerful antidotes to fear.

Though people understood things would never again be the same, they quickly realized that things should never again be the same.

Although change brought about anxiety, anyone understanding the basic concepts involved knew that America would soon grow stronger and more just each passing day.

In large cities, things continued to border on panic. There was nervousness in the air and people seemed to expect the worst. Police

riot squads were on high alert as governors, sheriffs, mayors, and police chiefs were in constant contact. Small skirmishes were frequent but quickly resolved by the large police presence before things could get out of hand.

The House of Representatives established a select committee to thoroughly document and study the information brought up in Chester Adamson's research.

The Senate followed suit, but directed its committee to concentrate on Article I, Section 8, Clause 17 of the U.S. Constitution and the district constituting the seat of government of the United States.

The best hope for responsible action was that all the original culprits were long since dead. Scores of Senators and Representatives were thus free to express their public indignation, vowing they would get to the bottom of the whole affair.

The financial markets were in jitters. Trading halted Thursday on the major American exchanges after suffering massive losses, especially in the intangible financial sector.

Of course, gold, silver, and most every tangible commodity spiked, with large orders placed for actual delivery. The gold exchanges soon found themselves scrambling to cover ordered deliveries, with shortfalls becoming widely evident as people everywhere began distrusting all paper claims.

The major banking houses began meeting with one another, trying to figure out how things would shake out.

There was a huge demand for cash, which yet reassured bankers that they would still remain viable, although wide numbers of people began closing out their accounts and forswearing banks altogether.

Early Thursday, banks throughout the nation pulled out their fine-print contracts with their depositors. Banks would no longer allow immediate access to one's deposited money in anything other

than nominal amounts which varied bank to bank, but depositors were told they could place their claims for their money in cash in larger amounts only by the original terms of their accounts.

The banks began sifting through their outstanding loans, placing them into different categories depending on a whole host of factors; amount borrowed, duration, type of loan, collateral, etc.

The bankers were preparing to call in loans should those funds be needed to meet depositor's demands once the time delay for accessing deposited funds elapsed.

If no effective government actions were yet in place by that time and continued demand necessitated it, all loans with any equity were in peril to be called due and payable immediately, even those cases where debtors were current with their payments, as the small print in the loans readily allowed.

Those debtors who had the least amount of money left to pay on their loan would be called in first, so the banks could generate the greatest amount of equity. Unless those borrowers could come up with the payoff balances, the loans closest to being paid off posed the greatest risk to the borrowers' pocketbook.

Time would not be wasted on loans maxed out near their collateral's worth, as re-marketing the collateral may not even cover the processing costs. The safest loans for borrowers were those loans yet closest to 100% of the value of the collateral.

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Charles Cunningham VII and his wife were at their villa in the Cayman Islands when Sarah's story broke. Charles didn't see it coming. He never knew the story of his great, great-grandfather. He

was the single person in the world most shocked by the story, simply because he figured he should have known about it if it were true.

His phone remained deadly quiet all day, as did his email accounts; eerily so.

He knew silence was the kiss of death in this situation, as his high-level contacts severed their ties with him for the sins of his ancestors which now threatened to unravel the world-wide financial empire built on nothing but hot air.

The financial market was a balloon overstuffed with explosive hydrogen which only needed a small pin to burst and Sarah's story easily provided the pin.

Whether that gas would dissipate relatively harmlessly or explode into a massive fireball was yet uncertain.

Charles phoned his son Duke early that morning and told him a chartered private jet was waiting for him at Sea-Tac Airport which would fly him and his wife to the Cayman Islands as soon as they got there.

Charles was thankful one of his pilots desired to get to the Cayman Islands to access his own offshore funds and retire in simple paradise as the modern world crumbled about him.

Duke didn't understand his father's concern because he hadn't yet heard the news. After he saw a special news bulletin, heard mention of his great-great-great-grandfather's name and then heard what he had done, Duke was frightened.

Duke and his wife Alexis grabbed their passports and quickly packed a few changes of clothes, Alexis' jewelry and headed for the airport.

Neither did Duke's phone ring again that day.

Alexis' phone rang only when her parents heard the news and became frightened for her safety and well-being.

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In accordance with his long-standing ritual, Floyd Tomkins picked up Thursday's paper off his porch before work and brought it in to read at the table with his morning coffee and breakfast.

He noticed the special edition outer wrap as he was walking. The bold headline screamed that it was important. The special edition cover showed even greater importance yet.

He sat down and began reading Sarah's story. When he read Mark Evanston's name, he froze. When he dared read on, he saw Chester Adamson's name. At that point he let out an involuntarily shriek. His startled wife Jennifer came out from the bathroom where she had been putting on her makeup.

"What's the matter, Honey?" Jennifer asked.

"Reporter Sarah Jacobs has a four-page special edition story detailing Chester Adamson's research which Mark Evanston discovered in our basement. The story looks big; very, very big."

"What's it about? Should we be worried?"

"From what I can tell, it's about money, banking and 'only' the start of the Civil War. I will have to read more to know for sure. It looks like it's going to take a while to read it, but I know I must."

Although Floyd didn't normally like anyone reading over his shoulder, he understood his wife must read the story, now.

Jennifer pulled up a chair as Floyd put some pillows on the table so the paper could be inclined sufficiently so they could both read it fairly well at the same time.

Even though Floyd had a head start, Jennifer finished reading the first page before him. She was petrified after reading just that page, but also knew she had to keep reading.

Once Floyd finished reading, he turned to page 2 and folded the paper inside-out. They didn't say anything to one another, but continued reading in silence.

Forty-five minutes later they finished reading Sarah's story. They sat stunned in silence.

"I'm calling in sick today," said Floyd.

"Me, too."

They weren't thinking about stockpiling food and supplies like most of the rest of the readers of that story that morning. They were thinking of that fateful September day last fall when Mark and Penny Evanston knocked on their door and later discovered Chester Adamson's research and gold.

Now they knew the contents of that research and it frightened them to have any part whatsoever in such an unsettling story.

"Do you think we're in any kind of danger or in trouble with anyone?" asked Jennifer.

"We haven't done anything wrong, so we're not in trouble," commented Floyd. "I don't know, but we may nevertheless be in danger."

"Should we call the police?" questioned Jennifer. "Should we leave town? What should we do? I think we must do something."

"I don't know what to think, or do," responded Floyd.

"I know with the scope of this story, someone is going to come knocking on our door someday soon. I'm not sure yet if we should be here when they do. I don't know where we'd go, however, to escape the long arm of the law. I guess some country without an extradition treaty, if we decide to leave.

"But we haven't done anything wrong, so maybe we shouldn't run. But then again, maybe it won't matter to some people that we hadn't done anything wrong. We may face retribution anyway.

"It seems there are going to be some mighty powerful people mighty upset over this news. This story will undoubtedly cause extensive repercussions to change the course of our country. I'm glad the information is out but I wish we never had bought this house," said an increasingly despondent Floyd.

"I wish we'd never let Mark Evanston in the door," quivered Jennifer. "I'm scared."

"I'm sorry, I don't mean to startle you. I just don't know what to think or how to respond. I think if we stay we should contact the authorities right away. I don't think federal authorities will cause us any harm; it is the high-finance interests that I'm worried about.

"We mustn't mention anything about the gold coins, ever. We just relate that Mark Evanston was looking for some old family documents and we let him search the house because we thought a treasure hunt for old family documents would be a fun way to spend the day.

"We just say he found some musty old documents that didn't look like anything valuable, so we let him have them. We tell the authorities that we didn't want those smelly documents around here, because of your allergies."

"But we don't say anything about the gold coins?" asked Jennifer.

"No, never, ever. We don't mention anything being valuable or about any gold, ever. If we are questioned and grilled separately, we do not know about anything being found other than the documents, which we didn't really look at.

"We could admit that we don't really know what Mark may have found in the spider-infested crawlspace when he was in there all alone. We just say there were only documents in the satchel when we saw them." replied Floyd.

"Whatever you say, it has to look like Mark could have gotten out anything valuable from the bag while he was yet in the crawl space, if

the discovered gold is somehow ever traced back to Chester Adamson or Mark Evanston.”

“You think that approach is best?”

“Yes, for us to give up our claim to gold looks more like we were in on things, which we weren’t. We just wanted our safety and things to be like they were before the treasure was found, and that’s the truth.”

“Ok, I think we should contact the authorities,” said Jennifer.

“Why don’t we wait an hour before deciding? Floyd commented. “I want to think things through a little bit better to verify we’re not forgetting something that comes back to bite us. Remember, it will be best not to say too much. It was a minor event that happened over six months ago. It was simply a pleasurable treasure hunt, for a little intrigue. Since it was just some old documents, not financial instruments or anything like that, we let Mark have them and forgot about the matter until this morning.”

“Agreed and understood.”

“We need to be as calm and collected as possible, though we should be able to readily admit we are nervous about the whole affair of being questioned by police about something so deadly serious and which has such wide repercussions.

“We just say we are scared because we now know that this previous owner was murdered for his information and thus we are concerned that others may yet wish us harm. That should be ample reason for us to be nervous, which again is our true position.”

“Which brings up the point that we didn’t know Chester Adamson was murdered until we read it in this morning’s paper, right?” asked Jennifer.

“Excellent point,” said Floyd. “Yes, we need to wait at least a little as we try and come up with all the questions that may come up and we both provide the same answers.”

“Wait,” replied Jennifer. “What about our contract with Mark and Penny? Do we keep it or get rid of it?”

“Good call,” said Floyd. “Let’s try and think things through. If we get rid of it but get caught somehow, it would look very bad for us.

“But if we present it right away, we’re only acknowledging the truth about something we signed before anything was found and before we knew anything at all. I think we acted prudently in filling out that contract, saying that we would get to keep anything valuable while Mark was allowed to keep any family documents. I don’t see how that could hurt us if anyone found out about it. I guess that means we disclose it from the get-go.

“That we had the right to any discovered treasure but don’t have any also better provides evidence there was none. It would seem unnatural to have the right to the treasure but not have any than that we voluntarily gave up our rights to the discovered treasure to a total stranger we hadn’t ever met before or knew anything about,” stated Floyd.

“Ok, agreed. I’d rather keep as close to the truth as possible to minimize the chances of any harm coming our way.”

“Ok, if we don’t come up with anything negative in the next 45 minutes, we’ll call the authorities, disclosing the event and the contract, but denying any and all gold.”

“Agreed.”

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Janet, Steve and their junior officers were very busy filling in the blanks for people in their online seminars, writings, and interviews. Their websites crashed several times as millions of people began accessing the sites and reading their materials.

Their web site host was scrambling to deal with all the traffic and improve its capacity. Temporary fixes were instituted until longer-term solutions were worked out and implemented.

Whereas Steve had once been surprised how the initial energy of their first tour had died down, he now saw the explosive impact of this new information. He knew that although this response would also someday mellow, he knew it was a game-changing event which would be with them for a long time to come.

All who were on the massive ship which had long before lost its constitutional rudder were now fully aware they were lost. Measures were now being taken to directly confront their current status quo to determine their present location, and to chart a new course back on its original destination.

Protestors were marching in the streets in many cities, often stopping in front of city hall or the largest bank buildings, chanting "Take America Back", "Restore America", "Throw the Banksters Out" and several slogans not fit for print.

Chapter Fourteen

Peter Dennison couldn't be happier. His life's work trying to get to the bottom of omnipotent government action operating far beyond the spirit of the Constitution helped shove that information front and center, far and wide, forever changing the United States of America, back toward her original course.

He could now die in complete peace, if it should come to that.

Of course he had a whole lot more to offer in helping straighten out the mess, so he certainly wasn't in any hurry to die.

With omnipotent government exposed as a fraud, the days of hiding were coming to an end. Peter decided it was time to stand and be counted again in purifying bright light of day.

It was time to send those who worked in deceit and deception into their rightful dungeons of darkness and remove their perceived validity and their apparent sanction of rightful authority.

Peter's only concern about coming forward was his tie to Mark's location through Jared Lockwood's vacation home.

Since Jared had purchased the property through a blind offshore trust used only to purchase that property, there weren't any land records that could tie him to the property, should Jared's tie to Peter ever be revealed.

Jared hadn't even been at the property in six years, although his wife and children had last been there four years earlier.

Chester Adamson's gold coins were sold to a private contact of Peter's, with no one else knowing of it, so there was no loose ends there to be traced back to Peter.

Peter and Janet Davidson pooled their resources, with Peter becoming the C.E.O. of their new non-profit organization. He brought along his senior advisors as board members.

Janet served as the Education Department Chair of the foundation, as she began setting up an educational program at four different levels; basic, intermediate, advanced, and professional. She labeled the levels bronze, silver, gold and platinum.

All seminars and speeches given were taped by the newly-formed media department which offered all the videos online free-of-charge.

All written publications were released into the public domain and made freely available electronically online.

Janet and Peter worked intensively with a group of 12 regional administrators who would soon be training fifty State leaders who in turn would work with county leaders.

Peter's ties to discretionary wealth provided the initial funding for launching the foundation, but Janet's name recognition started immediately bringing in vast donations far and wide once it was up and running. Donations poured in to fund ever-increasing programs to disseminate information.

The donations, of course, were necessary to fund the salaries for those implementing the foundation's vital work. There were a surprising number of dedicated volunteers however, who worked tirelessly without pay.

Whereas the foundation was a tax-exempt, non-profit charity otherwise prohibited from substantially getting involved with politics, Janet and Peter also started up the separate Patriot Corps as a private business which could therefore get involved with politics as needed.

Whereas the foundation concentrated on education, the Patriot Corps concentrated on action.

Whereas the foundation concentrated on answering the "Why," the Patriot Corps concentrated on the "How" to reclaim liberty.

With the cat out of the bag, hundreds and thousands of existing organizations turned their considerable efforts towards the restoring honesty, integrity and faith in government, a matter long overdue.

The American people soon began understanding why the U.S. government had for too long been so distrustful of its citizens; because truth had become omnipotent government's greatest enemy.

Omnipotent government without any legal basis but deception was the worst kind of government, as it could not even tolerate truth.

Where a despotic dictator could rule without limits and thus have greater validity, an *oppressive American government* was an oxymoron, a contradiction in terms.

Oppressive American government could only operate under the dark veil of lies and deception which had become its *modus operandi*, as that was what created and sustained it.

Omnipotent government without any legal basis but deception was terrified that even one meddlesome citizen could expose it as a spectacular fraud.

That rightful fear was now being fully realized.

This modern-day gargantuan Goliath stood over 2.3 billion acres of land, not including its territorial possessions. At its command were 10 nuclear powered aircraft carriers, 24 frigates, 61 destroyers, 71 submarines, 8,325 tanks, 18,539 armored vehicles, 15,293 aircraft, and 6,665 helicopters.

Goliath had lies, deceit, and things of the devil on his side, all but overshadowing its proper moral and legal base provided by all the other clauses of the Constitution which had long been ignored.

Battling against Goliath to cast aside those lies and deceit to uncover proper constitutional government was the modern-day David.

This David was an aging, broken down, out of shape, stubborn cuss in abject poverty, with a core group of four supporters.

In the background behind David and his four fellow warriors was the direct help of only several hundred people, with nary a weapon between them.

But David and his small army had things of God on their side; vital fundamental principles such as truth, justice, and the authentic American way.

Goliath also had a terrible vulnerability. Those many planes, tanks, and ships all relied on 1,477,896 active military personnel and another 1,458,500 reservists to operate them.

But those military personnel did not swear an oath to support Goliath, but the Constitution. And they swore an oath to support the Constitution; not just one clause.

Thus, with proper education, Goliath's military muscle must actually support the *whole* Constitution, not to ignore 99% of it while they violated its spirit with the remaining 1%.

Thus a war of violence wasn't only unnecessary, but dangerous.

David and his crew thus fought tyranny not with bullets, but with *bravery*; not with cannon balls, but *principles*; not with missiles, but *ideas*; not with firepower, but with *justice*; not with fire, but with *ideals* founded in liberty.

David and his miniscule troop properly showed why the First Amendment was mentioned before the Second.

This David needed not even a rock as ammunition or a sling as a weapon, as he sought to slay the omnipotent beast with nothing but the printed and spoken word of truth, which was Goliath's vulnerability.

In truth, the modern-day Goliath was found to be but a mirage in the desert, ceasing to exist once his motive power was openly displayed.

There was no Goliath to actually slay, because he was nothing but a dark figment of the imagination.

In the end, the only things needing to be slain were the misconceptions about American government in everyone's minds.

The brightest minds in America would soon begin turning their undivided attention toward the government seat which was once properly confined to a well-defined 10-miles square area of land.

The fences for that corral would soon properly be shored back up and all the loosened stallions would be rounded up. The ultimatum would become 'move back into that corral or else'.

Mark Evanston continued putting his nose to the grindstone, seeking to put in his *two-bits* worth of advice for defeating base tyranny to restore bare liberty and bald justice into the form of another new book.

Of course, the first *two-bits* of advice would be to restore that American quarter dollar to its true meaning as a coin of 92.8125 grains of fine silver.

Neither its 1853 lightening to only 86.4 grains of fine silver, nor especially its 1965 modification to copper and nickel were proper or just.

After all, neither frauds nor cheap imitations have any place in the 'Land of the Free and Home of the Brave'.

THE END

Author's Post Script:

Base Tyranny is a work of fiction. The story line was fabricated by drawing the straightest possible line between actual historic events; the primary characters were then made up and fashioned to act accordingly.

It is certainly possible that no one actually planned the devious means to the major events which really happened.

It is instead possible that unscrupulous opportunists merely seized the opportunities which presented before them for the same self-serving and deceitful ends as their counterparts in the novel.

For further information on America's monetary laws, study guides on the Constitution, and related matters, please see www.PatriotCorps.org or www.FoundationForLiberty.org.





About the Author

Matt Erickson lives in Vancouver, Washington, with his wife. He has two step-kids and six grandchildren. He is a truck driver.

Mark Evanston is back from *Bald Justice*, in its sequel *Base Tyranny*, again rigidly pursuing truth wherever it leads, in his quest for reclaiming liberty and justice, once and for all.

Investigating his fourth great-grandfather's 1871 murder, Mark fortuitously discovers his ancestor's research documenting the long-standing political feud between national banking proponents and hard money advocates.

When America established her Independent Treasury system under an August 6, 1846 act, hard money proponents clearly won the financial war under strict construction of the Constitution.

This 1846 sub-treasury system explicitly prohibited the U.S. government from depositing any public money in any bank — remarkably declaring any attempt felony embezzlement — and also forbade use of bank notes in payment of any public debts.

During this strict hard-money era, the U.S. government paid out expenses only in gold or silver coin, or, if individually acceptable to any given creditor, in government treasury notes.

Mark soon uncovers the bankers' desperate plot for Civil War to re-direct government beyond strict construction of the Constitution.

With war, paper currencies soon become legal tender for the first time under the Constitution and new national banking associations are allowed to form and soon become the fiscal agents of the United States.

Since a more complete paradigm shift of the U.S. financial and political structure could perhaps not have occurred between 1846 and 1863, Mark turned his undivided attention to this critical period.

Mark Evanston learns how scheming national banking proponents coupled Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton's 1791 opinion as to the constitutionality of the Bank of the United States with America's defense fortification system to deviously move government through Civil War towards base tyranny, to reinstate national banks to gain unfathomable wealth and power for the favored few.